PLAYS OF EDMOND ROSTAND

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PLAYS OF
EDMOND ROSTAND

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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TORONTO

THE EAGLET

PLAYS OF EDMOND ROSTAND

TRANSLATED BY

HENDERSON DAINGERFIELD NORMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY IVAN GLIDDEN

VOLUME TWO

PUBLIC LIBRARY

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1921

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"I cannot help thinking that the present war should bring to a permanent end the system whereby political personages use peoples as pawns on a chessboard.

"Certainly, in the light of Austrian methods leading up to this war,—methods that went right back to the days of Metternich,—political manipulation beyond the influence of the people it affects ought to disappear."

—Lord Haldane, March 7, 1916.

From
The War of Democracy
Quoted by translator

To my son Maurice, and to the memory of his heroic great-grandfather, Maurice, Count Gerard, Marshal of France.

Great God! Here is no cause
Defended or reviled.
I only bid you pause
To pity a poor child.

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"It is impossible to imagine the impression made . . . by the death of the young Napoleon. . . . I saw even young Republicans in tears."

—HEINE.

THE EAGLET

A DRAMA IN SIX ACTS

In Verse

THE EAGLET

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Franz, Duke of Reichstadt.
Seraphin Flambeau.
Prince Metternich.
Emperor Franz.
Marshal Marmont.
The Tailor.
Frederick of Gentz.
The French Attaché.
Chevalier of Prokesch-Osten.
Tiburce of Lorget.
Count of Dietrichstein (*Tutor to the* Duke).
Baron of Obenhaus.
Count of Bombelles.
General Hartmann.
The Doctor.
Count Sedlinsky (*Director of the Police*)
A Guard.
Lord Cowley (*English Ambassador*).
Thalberg.
Furstenberg.
Montenegro.
A Sergeant of the Duke's Regiment.
Captain Foresti.
An Old Peasant.
Pionnet.
Gobeaux.

An Usher.
A Mountaineer.
Marie-Louise, Duchess of Parma.
Countess Camerata.
Therese of Lorget (*sister to* Tiburce).
The Archduchess.
Fanny Elssler.
The Grand-Mistress.
Princess Grazalcowitch.
Certain Ladies of the Court.
Lady Cowley.
Ladies-in-Waiting to Marie-Louise.
An Old Peasant Woman.
The Royal Family; the Duke's Military Household; the Emperor's Guard; Archers; Ushers; Soldiers, etc.; Masks and Dominoes; Merry-Andrews; Clowns; Shepherdesses, etc.
Peasants; the Duke's Regiment.

1830-1832

Note—The Reader must not be surprised at finding here certain lines that the Spectator did not hear. In the production, it was necessary to finish within a given time. Therefore, some cutting was done, and the Author pretended not to notice.

ACT I

Fledgling Wings

Baden, near Vienna. Time 1830.

Salon of a villa occupied by Marie-Louise; *a great room in the middle of which is an Empire chandelier with crystal lustres; light wainscoting, mural decoration in Pompeian green; a frieze of sphinxes. Left, two doors; the first leads to the apartments of* Marie-Louise; *the other to those of her* Ladies-in-Waiting. *Right, another door; farther back in an alcove an enormous, highly decorated porcelain stove. Back, between two windows, a large French window, through which can be seen the balustrade of a balcony which leads into the garden. A glimpse of the park; lindens and fir trees; densely shaded walks, the arches hung with lanterns. A glorious day in early September.*

In this common rented villa, precious furnishing has been set. Left, near the window, a fine cheval glass of lemon wood, decorated with bronzes; front, a great mahogany table strewn with papers; against the wall a lacquered table with books. Right, back, a small Erard piano of the period; a harp, a Récamier sofa near a low table; easy chairs, footstools; many flowers in vases; on the walls framed engravings representing members of the Austrian royal family; portraits of Emperor Franz; *the* Duke of Reichstadt *as a child, etc.*

The curtain rises upon a group of very fashionable ladies, in the background. Two are at the piano, their backs to the audience, trying a duet. A third is at the harp; somebody is trying to explain. Laughter; interruptions.

A lackey ushers in, by the perron, a modest-looking young girl, accompanied by an officer of the Austrian Horse; very resplendent in blue and silver. The newcomers, seeing that nobody

notices them, remain standing for a moment in a corner of the big room. At this moment, enter, right, the COUNT DE BOMBELLES, *attracted by the music. He starts toward the piano, beating time as he goes, but, seeing the young girl, stops, smiles, and goes quickly toward her.*

SCENE I

THERESE, TIBURCE, BOMBELLES, MARIE-LOUISE; LADIES-IN-WAITING

THE LADIES (*at the harpsichord, talking all the time and both together and giggling incessantly*):
She misses all the flats! . . . She skips them all!
—I'll take the bass. . . . One, two. The harp! Fa . . . lal!
La . . . la. Now, pedal! . . .

BOMBELLES (*to* THERESE): You?

THERESE: My Lord Bombelles . . .

ANOTHER LADY (*at the harpsichord*): Mi . . . sol . . .

THERESE: I have become a reader.

ANOTHER LADY (*at the harpsichord*): Flat? . . . O well! . . .

THERESE: Thanks to your goodness.

BOMBELLES: Simply done, my dear.
My relative, and French, . . . so you are here.

THERESE (*presenting the officer*): Tiburce.

BOMBELLES (*offers his hand to* TIBURCE; *to* THERESE, *indicating a sofa*): Sit down. Pray don't feel shy.

THERESE: I am so moved!

BOMBELLES (*smiling*): Now, in the Lord's name, why?

THERESE: To be so close to all on earth that's near
The Emperor!

BOMBELLES (*sitting down by her*):
Well, well! That's it, my dear?

TIBURCE (*hastily*): Our people hated him, and I for one . . .

THERESE: Yes . . . but . . . to see . . .

TIBURCE (*a little scornfully*): His wife? . . .

THERESE (*to* BOMBELLES): Perhaps . . . his son?

BOMBELLES: Surely.
THERESE: Oh, sir, a girl, it seems to me,
Must be without soul . . . unread . . . not French, . . . and be . . .
O, in a word, not young . . . to see unmoved
The widow and the son the Emperor loved.
She is very lovely?
BOMBELLES: Who?
THERESE: The Duchess, sir.
BOMBELLES (*surprised*): But . . .
THERESE (*eagerly*): Sorrow lends its loveliness to her?
BOMBELLES: You puzzle me. You haven't seen her?
THERESE: No.
TIBURCE: We were this moment ushered in, you know.
BOMBELLES (*smiling*): Yes, but . . .
TIBURCE (*glancing toward the musicians*):
We feared to interrupt . . . I lack a word . . .
That . . . gamut giggled to the harpsichord.
THERESE: I await the Empress in this sheltered place.
BOMBELLES (*rising*): Eh? What? My child, 'tis she who plays the bass.
THERESE (*rising, overcome*): The Emp . . .
BOMBELLES: I'll tell her.
(*He goes to the piano and speaks in a low voice to one of the ladies.*)
MARIE-LOUISE (*turning*): Ah, that little one?
A touching story . . . yes . . . how does it run?
A brother, who . . .
BOMBELLES: Son of an exile, he's an exile still.
TIBURCE (*advancing; in a deprecatory tone*):
The Austrian uniforms my yearnings fill.
They mean fox-hunting, that which I adore.
MARIE-LOUISE (*to* THERESE): He is a good-for-naught and nothing more
Taking the little you have left. . . .
THERESE (*eager to excuse* TIBURCE): My brother . . .

MARIE-LOUISE: I repeat
A scapegrace—you excuse him; that is sweet.
Therese of Lorget, you are just a love.
(*She takes her hand and makes her sit down near her on the sofa.* TIBURCE *and* BOMBELLES, *talking, withdraw a little.*)
Now, you're among my ladies. I must prove
I can be pleasant . . . Ah, a trifle less
Light-hearted since . . .
THERESE (*moved*): Oh, if I could express . . .
I am so moved . . . so troubled . . .
MARIE-LOUISE (*drying her eyes*): Such a loss!
Few knew his soul!
THERESE (*trembling*): Surely . . .
MARIE-LOUISE (*to* BOMBELLES): They'll keep his horse,—
I have just written,—in a special stall.
(*To* THERESE) Since the General's death, you know . . .
THERESE (*astonished*): The . . . General?
MARIE-LOUISE: He kept that title . . .
THERESE: I understand!
MARIE-LOUISE: I weep.
THERESE (*with sentiment*): What other name so glorious to keep?
MARIE-LOUISE: One doesn't feel it fully at the start,
But General Neipperg's death quite broke my heart.
THERESE (*stupefied*): Neipperg?
MARIE-LOUISE: I came to Baden for diversion.
Vienna is not far. And some excursion
My nerves *demanded*. I am thin, Oh very!
—They say it makes me look just like De Berry.
Vitrolles says so. So now I do my hair
Like hers, you see.—God knows my deep despair!
(*She looks around her.*)
It's tiny, but not bad, this villa, dear.
Metternich is our passing guest. He's here,
But leaves this evening. Baden isn't bad.

We've Thalberg and the Sandors and we've had
Montenegro,—sings Spanish songs, you know.
Fontana shrieks an air from *Figaro;*
The archduchess comes, with the ambassadress
From England. . . . But my grief is never less;
I'm just heart-broken. My poor General! . . .
—Of course, my dear, you're going to the ball?

THERESE (*looking at her with increasing amazement*):
But . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*impetuously*):
At the Meyendorff . . . Strauss from Vienna . . . Tell
The child she must come—mustn't she, Bombelles?

THERESE: What is, if I may ask your Majesty . . .
News of the Duke of Reichstadt?

MARIE-LOUISE: Franz? Ah, he . . .
. . . He coughs a little. But this air is sweet
At Baden. A young man! about to meet
The world . . . a solemn time . . . Heavens! that child
Lieutenant-colonel! Ah! It makes me wild . . .
—Would you believe my nerves would take that form,—
I cannot see him in his uniform?
(*Enter two gentlemen, carrying certain green boxes.*)
(*With a cry of joy*): These are for him. Oh, see!

SCENE II

The Same. The DOCTOR *and his son, carrying long glass-topped boxes; later,* METTERNICH

THE DOCTOR (*bowing*): Yes, our surprise.

MARIE-LOUISE: Put them down, Doctor.

BOMBELLES: What?

MARIE-LOUISE: His butterflies.

THERESE: Butterflies?

MARIE-LOUISE: Yes. You see, this kind old man
Is doctor at the baths. Once, he began

To show me all these boxes, newly done,
His son's collection. "If," I sighed, "my son
Would care for these,—who cares for nothing now!"

THE DOCTOR: Then I said to her Majesty, "I vow
One never knows. No harm to him who tries."
I've brought my butterflies. . . .

THERESE (*aside*): His *butterflies!*

MARIE-LOUISE (*to the* DOCTOR, *sighing*):
He must be coaxed out of his sadness. I
Wonder if he will like your . . .

DOCTOR: Lepidoterae.

MARIE-LOUISE: Just leave them and return. He's out.

(*The* DOCTOR *and his son go out, after having arranged them on the table.*)

MARIE-LOUISE (*turning to* THERESE): Come now
You're going to meet Scarampi. Your best bow,
She's the Grand-Mistress!
(*Seeing* METTERNICH, *who enters, right*)
Metternich! Dear Prince!
The hall is yours.

METTERNICH: I must permit it, since
The envoy must be met . . .

MARIE-LOUISE: Yes, such a bore.

METTERNICH: General Belliard, the French ambassador,
Councillor Gentz and certain gentlemen.
(*To a lackey who appears, at the back, on the steps in answer to a summon*)
The Count of Gentz, first.
(*To* MARIE-LOUISE) You permit?

MARIE-LOUISE: Well, then . . .

(*She goes out with* THERESE, TIBURCE *and* BOMBELLES *following.* GENTZ *appears C, ushered in by a lackey. Very exquisite; a bored old face; pockets full of candy boxes and flasks of perfumery; he constantly nibbles a sugarplum or sniffs a vial.*)

SCENE III

METTERNICH, GENTZ; *later a French officer, attaché of the Embassy*

METTERNICH: How-d'ye do, Gentz?
(*Seats himself by the table R. and begins, as he chats, to sign the papers* GENTZ *takes from a large portfolio.*)
I leave, you know, to-day;
The Emperor wants me at Vienna.
GENTZ: Ah?
METTERNICH: I say
The thing's a bore. Vienna now!
GENTZ: As empty as my pocket.
METTERNICH: Oh, come . . . Without offense, 'tis said you stock it
With Russian . . .
(*With his fingers he makes a gesture of slipping coins across the table.*)
GENTZ (*with mock indignation*): Me?
METTERNICH: Let us be frank. You boast . . .
You've come to sell . . .
GENTZ (*coolly, crunching a sugarplum*): To him who bids the most.
METTERNICH: Do you need money?
GENTZ (*sniffing his perfumes*): For a debauch I've planned.
METTERNICH: You pass for my right hand!
GENTZ: Then your left hand
Must not know what your right hand doeth, sir.
METTERNICH: Fi! Sugarplums and perfumes.
GENTZ: You refer
To just our business; scents and sweets cost gold.
I'm just an old spoilt child.
METTERNICH (*shrugging his shoulders*): And as of old
This pretense of self-scorn.
(*Brusquely*) And Fanny, eh?
GENTZ: Elssler? She doesn't love me. Plain as day,

She finds me old, . . . grotesque . . .
(*Indicating the portrait of the* DUKE OF REICHSTADT)
She loves the lad.
I'm just a screen. I find that not so bad.
For after all 'tis service to the State
To interest the Duke. I bit the bait.
I dance attendance where the dancer goes.
She'd have me come this evening,—'neath the rose,—
Help her surprise the Duke.

METTERNICH (*who all this time is signing papers*):
You scandalize me!

GENTZ: Mother'll be gone . . . this ball.
(*He takes a letter from his portfolio and hands it to* METTERNICH.) Read this. Advise me.
A letter from Fouché's son.

METTERNICH (*reading*): August twentieth . . .

GENTZ: He would transform . . .

METTERNICH: Otranto wastes his breath . . .

GENTZ: Our Duke of Reichstadt to Napoleon Second.

METTERNICH (*glancing through the letter*): Names of his partisans . . .

GENTZ: Yes.

METTERNICH: Let them be reckoned;
(*He hands the letter to* GENTZ) Note them all well.

GENTZ: But we refuse . . .

METTERNICH: This chance,
Not killing hope outright. I reign in France
Through our small Colonel. From his box—crac-cric,—
I bring him, if, forgetting Metternich,
They lean to left. When they come back to right,
Back goes the Colonel, and the lid's clamped tight.

GENTZ (*entertained*): When may one see the spring touched?

METTERNICH: Where you are,
And now.
(*He rings for a lackey.*)
Admit the envoy of General Belliard.

(*The lackey ushers in a French officer in dress uniform.*)
Good day, sir.
(*He holds out certain sealed documents.*)
With the papers in this heap,
Our recognition of King Louis Philippe;
But not too much of '89, I beg,
For pressure has been known to break an egg.

THE ENVOY (*alarmed at once*):
That's an allusion to Prince François Charles?

METTERNICH: Duke of Reichstadt? . . . I don't admit, recall,
His father ever reigned.

THE ENVOY (*with ironic generosity*): I admit it, sir.

METTERNICH: I will do nothing for the Duke, . . . but . . .
heed me, sir . . .

THE ENVOY: *But* . . . ?

METTERNICH: But if to foolish liberalists you pander,—
If you permit the smallest propaganda,—
If Monsieur Royer Collard would be chief,
Waving before your king his handkerchief,—
If your new king should turn Republican,—
My Monarch's not an angel but a man,—
We might remember Grandson Franz. All's said.

THE ENVOY (*eagerly*): We have no mind to dye our lilies red.

METTERNICH (*graciously*): In that case, sir, be perfectly at ease.
White lilies are not troubled by the bees.

THE ENVOY (*drawing nearer and lowering his voice*):
One fears in spite of you the Duke has hopes.

METTERNICH: No.

THE ENVOY: Late events . . .

METTERNICH: Dear sir, *I* hold the ropes.

THE ENVOY: You mean to hint he doesn't know this thing?
He doesn't know France has another king?

METTERNICH: Yes, that! He lacks one detail, this odd chance,—
That the tricolor floats again in France.
There's always time.

THE ENVOY: I see—I did not think . . .
'Twould make him drunk with hope.
METTERNICH: He doesn't . . . drink.
THE ENVOY (*still uneasy*): At Baden, sir, his guard is less severe.
METTERNICH (*very serene*): He needs no guard. He's with his mother here.
ENVOY: I don't quite understand.
METTERNICH: Her interest
In watching him? Plots would disturb her rest . . .
Her lovely calm.
THE ENVOY: 'Tis not a calm complete;
She broods her eaglet!
(*The door of* MARIE-LOUISE'S *apartment is flung open; she enters with a rush, and a shriek of despair.*)
MARIE-LOUISE: Oh, my parrokeet!

SCENE IV

The Same. MARIE-LOUISE *for a moment; her ladies who follow her, wildly; later* BOMBELLES *and* TIBURCE

THE ENVOY: Huh?
MARIE-LOUISE: Margharitina, Prince, has flown away!
METTERNICH (*desolated*): Oh!
MARIE-LOUISE: My darling parrokeet!
METTERNICH (*to the* ENVOY, *who looks at her in bewilderment*):
Her eaglet, eh?
THE ENVOY (*going forward and bowing*): Your highness, may I offer . . .
MARIE-LOUISE (*interrupting snappishly*): No.
(*She glances at him angrily and returns to her rooms. The door slams.*)
THE ENVOY (*more and more bewildered, to* METTERNICH):
What's this I see?
METTERNICH: You said your Highness; we, her Majesty!
THE ENVOY: The Emperor never having reigned, dear Sir,
'Tis odd his Majesty remains with her.

METTERNICH: My diplomat, the lady does the trick.
THE ENVOY (*still puzzled*): A bit choleric?
METTERNICH: Proto-col-eric.
THE ENVOY (*salutes, about to take his leave. He pauses and asks*): The Embassy, dear Prince, here and to-day
May wear the tricolor?
METTERNICH (*sighing*): Of course you may.
The thing's agreed. . . .
(*Instantly the* ENVOY *throws away the white cockade and replaces it with the tricolor taken from his pocket.*)
METTERNICH (*rising, says*): Your action's prompt and hearty.
(*Noises and clattering without*): What's that?
GENTZ (*who is on the balcony*): The Archduchess and her charming party.
The Meyendorffs, Cowleys, Thalberg!
BOMBELLES (*who at the sound of arrivals has entered eagerly, left, with* TIBURCE): Come. What sport!
(*As he hastens to the door, the* ARCHDUCHESS *appears on the perron, surrounded by a sea of ladies and gentlemen, charmingly costumed for the Baths;—Gravedon and Deveria,—light dresses, big hats, parasols; a little grand-duke of five or six in hussar's uniform, a tiny military cape thrown over his shoulders; two little grand-duchesses in the marvelous frocks of little girls of that period. A tumult of frivolity.*)

SCENE V

The Same. The ARCHDUCHESS; *fashionable ladies; elegant gentlemen;* LORD *and* LADY COWLEY; THALBERG; SANDOR; MONTENEGRO, *etc. Later,* THERESE, SCARAMPI, *a* LADY-IN-WAITING.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*to* BOMBELLES, METTERNICH, GENTZ, TIBURCE, *who advance ceremoniously*):
No, no! This is a villa, not a court.
(*The salon is filled; to a young man*)
Thalberg, my tarentelle! Quick! Play for me!

(THALBERG *goes to the piano and begins to play; to* METTERNICH, *gaily*):

Her Majesty, my sister, where is she?

A LADY: We came to capture her.

ANOTHER: I know she'd love

The trip we've planned;

A coaching trip, we move

Across the valleys; Sandor's guide.

A MAN'S VOICE (*continuing a conversation*): So push

The lava back into the crater.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*turning to that group*): Hush!

They've talked volcanoes since our drive began.

BOMBELLES: Volcanoes?

A LADY (*to another, talking of fashions*):

Oh, you *don't* mean astrachan?

SANDOR (*answering* BOMBELLES): This liberalism . . .

BOMBELLES: Ah!

LORD COWLEY: Or rather France . . .

METTERNICH (*with a severe air, to the* ENVOY): You hear?

A LADY (*to a young man whom she positively pushes toward the piano*): Ah, Montenegro, give us your romance!

Low . . . just for me.

MONTENEGRO (*accompanied by* THALBERG, *sings softly*):

Ah, *Corazon!* (*He continues, very softly.*)

A LADY (*to* GENTZ): See, Gentz, to prove

I thought of you, a new kind . . .

(*She gives him a little box.*)

GENTZ: Oh, you love!

ANOTHER (*same*): A Paris perfume. (*Handing him a tiny flask.*)

METTERNICH (*who sees the flask, to* GENTZ, *hurriedly*):

Ha, a fashion set?

"Cologne of Duke of Reichstadt!"

GENTZ (*smelling it*): Violet!

METTERNICH (*taking it from him, erases the mark with scissors taken from the table*):

He'd see that Paris thinks of him again.

A Voice in the Group of Men (*at the back*):
The hydra lifts its head.
Lady Cowley: Oh, dear, those men!
Talking of hydras, now!
Lord Cowley: It must be strangled.
Archduchess (*laughing*):
Volcanoes and now hydras! How they've wrangled!
A Lady-in-Waiting *to* Marie-Louise (*who enters, followed by a servant who carries a tray full of tall glasses of iced coffee*): *Eis-Kaffee?*
(*Another servant has put on the table a tray with beer, champagne, etc.*)
The Archduchess (*seated, to a young girl*): Say it, Olga.
Gentz: It appears
We must have Heine.
All the Ladies (*clapping*): Yes!
Olga (*rising*): Two Grenadiers?
Metternich (*excitedly*): Oh, no!
Scarampi (*entering from* Marie-Louise's *apartments*):
Her Majesty will join us presently.
Several Voices: Scarampi!
(*Greetings, laughter, rustlings, whispering.*)
Sandor's Voice (*from the group at the back*):
Krainerhutte, first, you see
To let the ladies gambol on the green.
Metternich (*to* Gentz, *who has taken up a newspaper from the table*): What are you reading?
Gentz: First *Debats* I've seen . . .
For days . . .
Lord Cowley (*carelessly*): Politics?
Gentz: Theatres.
Archduchess: Ah! Trifler still!
Gentz: Know what they're playing at the new Vaudeville?
Metternich: No.
Gentz: *"Bonaparte."*
Metternich (*indifferently*): Ah?

GENTZ: At the Novelty?
METTERNICH: No.
"Bonaparte" . . . *"Napoleon"* at the Variety.
The Luxembourg, *"His Fourteen Years"* . . . Ha, hum . . .
"Return from Russia," the Gymnasium.
Let's see, the Gaiety is putting on
"Napoleon's Coachman" and La Malmaison.
Here's *"Saint Helena,"*—playwright's someone new.
The Port Saint Martin is rehearsing, too,
"Napoleon."
LORD COWLEY (*annoyed*): A fashion.
TIBURCE (*shrugging*): A furor.
GENTZ: The Ambigu, *"Murat"*; Circus, *"The Emperor."*
SANDOR (*uncomfortably*): A fad.
BOMBELLES (*scornfully*): The merest fad.
GENTZ: A fad? Perchance . . .
It's one they have from time to time in France.
A LADY (*reading through her lorgnet, over* GENTZ'S *shoulder*):
They want to bring his ashes home.
METTERNICH (*drily*): Phoenix may rise,
But not the eagle.
TIBURCE: No one can surmise
Poor France's future.
METTERNICH (*grandly*): Ah, indeed, young man?
I know it.
A LADY: Prophet! Tell it, if you can.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*swinging an imaginary censer*):
His words are writ in bronze.
GENTZ (*under his breath*): You mean, in brass.
LORD COWLEY: Who will save France?
METTERNICH: Henry the Fifth (*with a gesture of condescending pity*). The rest will pass,
A fashion!
THERESE (*in her corner, softly*): There seems a sudden passion
For hiding Glory in the mask of Fashion.
METTERNICH (*turning to his glass of champagne*):

So long as only at the Odeon
One hears the cry . . .

A Loud Cry (*without*): Long live Napoleon!

(*Everybody starts up. Panic reigns.* Lord Cowley *chokes over his iced coffee. The ladies try wildly to find hiding places.*)

Everybody (*running about*): At Baden? Here? What? Why?

Metternich: Ridiculous!
Don't be afraid.

Lord Cowley: A deuced silly fuss!
—Run from a name!

Gentz (*cries solemnly*): He's dead.

(*Things begin to calm down.*)

Tiburce (*who has been on the balcony, returning*):
'Twas just one man.

Metternich: But who?

Tiburce: An Austrian soldier.

Metternich (*stupefied*): Austrian?

Tiburce: Or, really, two. I saw . . .

Metternich: Unfortunate!

(*At this moment her door opens and* Marie-Louise *enters, white and scared.*)

SCENE VI

The Same. Marie-Louise; *later, an Austrian Soldier*

Marie-Louise (*in a choked voice*): You heard it? I am in a shocking state!
I heard it once . . . a surging crowd drew nigh
Around my coach in Parma. (*She sinks on a sofa.*)
And that cry!
They want to kill me!

Metternich (*nervously, to* Tiburce): Tell us what it meant?

Tiburce: Two soldiers of his Highness' regiment.
They saw the Duke returning from his ride.
You know the ditch, close by? It's rather wide.

He tried to take it, but his horse rebelled,
Backed, shied, and reared; the little Duke compelled
The restive brute,—'twas rather neatly done,—
Hop-la and over; and the noise, begun.

METTERNICH: Send one of them to me!

(TIBURCE *gives the order from the perron.*)

MARIE-LOUISE (*to whom her ladies are giving smelling salts*):
O, I shall die!

(*Enter a sergeant of the* DUKE'S *regiment. He salutes awkwardly, embarrassed by the brilliant company.*)

METTERNICH (*angrily*): Sergeant, what was the meaning of that cry?
Tell me.

SERGEANT: Why, I don't know.

METTERNICH: You do not know?

SERGEANT: No, nor the corporal, neither, there below,
He don't know, sir. It caught us, sir. You see
The prince, so young and slim, so masterly, . . .
The regiment is proud to have, of course,
Its colonel son of . . .

METTERNICH (*hurriedly*): Well . . .

SERGEANT: He sat his horse
So quiet, like a little blonde St. George
And made him take it. Eh, I felt my gorge
Just choke. . . . We don't know which of us begun.
We up and cried "Long live . . .

METTERNICH (*precipitately*): What's done is done;
But "Live the Duke," that form we much prefer;
That isn't hard?

SERGEANT (*simply*): It's not so easy, sir.

METTERNICH: Hein?

SERGEANT (*trying it*): "Long live the Duke!" . . . it hasn't got the swing!

METTERNICH (*beside himself, dismissing him angrily*):
Go on! Get out! And don't shout anything!

TIBURCE (*to the soldier as he passes near him in going out*):
You fool!

SCENE VII

The same, lacking the SERGEANT; DIETRICHSTEIN *enters almost immediately*

MARIE-LOUISE (*to the ladies who surround her*): I'm better, thank you.

THERESE (*looking at her forlornly*): The Empress!

MARIE-LOUISE (*to* DIETRICHSTEIN, *indicating* THERESE):
Monsieur de Dietrichstein, . . . our reader, . . . yes . . .
Just come.
(*To* THERESE, *presenting her to* DIETRICHSTEIN)
His Highness' tutor. By the way
Do you read well?

TIBURCE (*answering for her*): Very.

THERESE (*modestly*): I don't know . . .

MARIE-LOUISE: Take, pray,
Some book of Franz's . . . on that table . . . see,
Read at a venture.

THERESE (*taking a book*): From *Andromache?*
(*Complete silence. Everybody listens. She reads*):
"What is this fear that strikes at every heart,
My lord? Some Trojan has escaped the dart? . . .
Their fear of Hector brings his shadow near;
They fear his son."
(*Everybody stares uncomfortably. Icily*),
"Fit object of their fear!
Who knows not yet,—Ah, most unhappy one!—
Though Pyrrhus rules him, he is Hector's son."
(*General embarrassment.*)

EVERYBODY: Hum . . . ha . . .

GENTZ: A charming voice.

MARIE-LOUISE (*nervously to* THERESE): Another page.

THERESE (*opens the book at another place*):
"Oh, I remember when his noble rage
Bade him seek out Achilles, and his death,
He embraced his son . . .

(*General embarrassment once more.*)

. . . *and with his parting breath,*
'Dear wife,' he said, and dried my eyes the while,
'No soldier knows if Fate will frown or smile;
I leave to thee my son . . . '"

(*Renewed murmurs; more embarrassment.*)

EVERYBODY: Hum . . . yes . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*more and more constrained*): Let's turn
To something else. . . . Take . . .

THERESE (*taking another book from the table*): *Mediations.*

MARIE-LOUISE: I yearn
For that. . . . I know the author. That will be
Less . . . dull . . . (*To* SCARAMPI, *vivaciously*)
He dined once . . . with the Embassy.

THERESE (*reading*): *"Never did seraphims' melodious song*
Ring through the skies more heavenly pure and strong;
Courage! Descendant of a race divine! . . ."

(*At this moment the* DUKE *appears in the doorway, centre.*

THERESE (*feels that some one has entered, looks up from the book and sees the* DUKE, *pale and motionless, on the threshold. Overcome, she rises. As she moves, everybody turns, and rises.*)

SCENE VIII

The Same; the DUKE

THE DUKE: Mother, I beg Lamartine's grace, and thine—

MARIE-LOUISE: Ah, Franz, a pleasant ride?

THE DUKE (*comes down; he is in riding costume; crop in hand; very elegant; a flower in his buttonhole; and he never smiles*): The air was sweet.
(*Turning to* THERESE) I interrupted. Will you please repeat?

THERESE (*hesitates for a moment; then, looking at the* DUKE, *with profound emotion*): *Courage, descendant of a race divine.*

Thy father's glories on thy forehead shine.
All men in seeing thee . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*drily, rising*): There, that will do.

ARCHDUCHESS (*to the children, indicating the* DUKE):
Go, greet your cousin, children.
(*The children run to the* DUKE, *who has seated himself. A little boy and a little girl climb on his lap.*)

SCARAMPI (*in a low voice, angrily, to* THERESE): Shame on you!

THERESE: Why, please?

A LADY (*looking at the* DUKE): He's very pale.

ANOTHER: How frail he looks!

ANOTHER: He hardly seems alive!

SCARAMPI: Those lines!

THERESE: Indeed, the books
Fell open of themselves. I only said . . .
(SCARAMPI *shrugs her shoulders and walks off.*)

GENTZ (*who has heard, nodding his head*):
Where books fall open, they are oftenest read.

THERESE (*aside, looking sadly at the* DUKE):
The archduke on his knees.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*to the* DUKE, *leaning over the back of his armchair*): Be sure it's true
I always am your friend.

THE DUKE (*kissing her hand*): Yes, I have you.

GENTZ (*to* THERESE, *who has never taken her eyes from the* DUKE): How do you find him? What do you descry?—
A cherub who reads Werther on the sly?
(*The children who flock around the* DUKE *admire the elegance of their grown cousin; they play with his watch-guard, his pin, admire his stock.*)

THE LITTLE GIRL (*on his knee, dazzled*): Your collars are so pretty.

THE DUKE (*bowing*): Highness, you are kind.

THERESE (*aside, ruefully*): His collars!

A LITTLE BOY (*who has taken the* DUKE'S *riding crop, flourishing it*): Nobody has such sticks.

THE DUKE (*gravely*): Not one you'll find.
THERESE: His sticks!
ANOTHER LITTLE BOY (*touching the gloves the* DUKE *has pulled off and tossed on the table*): O, and your gloves!
THE DUKE: Fine,—very.
A LITTLE GIRL (*putting her finger on his waistcoat*):
What stuff is this?
THE DUKE: My dear, it's Pondicherry.
THERESE (*ready to cry*): Oh!
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*caressing with the tips of her fingers the rosebud the* DUKE *wears in his buttonhole*):
Even your flower is modish, on my soul.
THE DUKE (*rising, and speaking with bitter forced levity*):
You noticed that? The proper buttonhole.
(THERESE *suddenly bursts into tears.*)
THE LADIES: What is it?
THERESE: Pardon me . . . nothing . . . not a single thing . . .
Alone . . . so far from home . . .
MARIE-LOUISE (*coming up, with effusive kindness*):
Poor little thing!
THERESE: My heart had been so full . . .
MARIE-LOUISE (*caressing her*): Now, room is made!
THE DUKE (*who has moved nearer, apparently without observing* THERESE, *stops, touching with his foot something on the carpet*):
What am I stepping on? A white cockade?
(*He picks it up.*)
METTERNICH (*embarrassed, coming forward*): Huh!
THE DUKE (*glancing about him for a moment, sees the* FRENCH ENVOY): This is yours? You lost it in some manner?
(*The* ENVOY *shows him his hat; he sees the tricolor.*)
Ah! (*To* METTERNICH)
You did not tell me, sir . . . But then . . . the banner?
METTERNICH: Highness . . .
THE DUKE: The same?
METTERNICH: A trifle . . . Nothing in't.

THE DUKE (*phlegmatically*): Nothing.
METTERNICH: Question of colour.
THE DUKE: Just a tint.
(*He has taken the* ENVOY'S *hat and by the dark felt tries the two cockades; he compares them like an artist, holding the hat at arm's length, holding his head on one side.*)
I think . . . see for yourself, . . . by every test . . .
Decidedly that . . . this one is the best.
(*He mounts the tricolor.*)
(*He throws down the white cockade and strolls away. His mother takes his arm and leads him to the cases of butterflies which the* DOCTOR, *who has re-entered, has arranged on the large table.*)
THE DUKE: Butterflies?
MARIE-LOUISE (*trying to interest him*):
Do you like the black one, Franz?
THE DUKE: 'Tis pretty.
THE DOCTOR: Bred on umbelliferous plants.
THE DUKE: He stares with both his wings.
THE DOCTOR (*smiling*): And all his eyes?
We call them lunes.
THE DUKE: And yet they look so wise.
THE DOCTOR: You're looking at the gray, with blue dots filled?
THE DUKE: No.
THE DOCTOR: At what, then?
THE DUKE: The pin by which 'twas killed.
THE DOCTOR (*in despair to* MARIE-LOUISE): Everything bores him.
MARIE-LOUISE (*to* SCARAMPI): I hope for good effect, . . .
SCARAMPI (*mysteriously*): From our surprise?
GENTZ (*who has come close to the* DUKE): A sweet?
THE DUKE (*taking one*): Oh, most select,
A taste of pears . . . and . . . let me see . . . vervains . . .
And . . . wait . . . of . . .
GENTZ: No, it isn't worth the pains.

THE DUKE: The pains . . . of what?
GENTZ: Playing such things have weight.
I am not Metternich. . . . A chocolate?
THE DUKE (*haughtily*): What do you see?
GENTZ: A prince, young, wistful, tender,
Who yet finds little sweetness in this splendour.
Your soul stirs now, my Prince. But here at court
The growing pains of souls are very short.
I had a soul, even I, like all the rest.
But—pfft! . . . I wait, a trifler with the best
Until one day, avenging Liberty,
Some young fool from the University
In my perfumes, my candies and my slough
Will murder me,—as Sand killed Kotzebue!
Yes, I'm afraid . . . do try this sugared grape . . .
I shall be killed like that.
THE DUKE: You'll not escape.
GENTZ (*recoiling*): Hein? What?
THE DUKE: You will be slain and by a youth.
GENTZ: But . . .
THE DUKE: One whom you know.
GENTZ (*aghast*): Highness . . .
THE DUKE: His name, in truth,
Is Frederick. It is he whom you have slain.
Since in your memory he wakes again,
Since, like remorse, he whispers, ceaseless, low,
'Tis finished . . . he will never let you go.
GENTZ: 'Tis true. My lost youth rises up to smite.
That look! that look! I knew I read it right.
The look of one with Empire in his hand.
THE DUKE: Your pardon, sir. I do not understand.
(*He moves away.* METTERNICH *rejoins* GENTZ.)
METTERNICH (*smiling*): You chatted with . . .
GENTZ: Yes.
METTERNICH: Good mannered.
GENTZ: All concede . . .

METTERNICH: I hold him in my hand.
GENTZ: Oh, yes, indeed.
THE DUKE (*has drawn near* THERESE *who, seated in a corner, is turning the pages of a book. He considers the bowed head a moment; then*): Why did you weep?
THERESE (*rising in great confusion*): Because . . .
THE DUKE: No . . .
THERESE (*more confused*): Highness, Oh . . .
THE DUKE: I know why. Do not weep.
(*He moves quickly away and finds himself face to face with* METTERNICH, *who has just taken his hat and gloves.*)
METTERNICH (*saluting the* DUKE): Duke, I must go.
(*The* DUKE *responds with an inclination of the head.* METTERNICH *goes out, talking with the* ENVOY.)
THE DUKE (*to* MARIE-LOUISE *and* DIETRICHSTEIN, *who are looking over some papers on the table*): My exercise?
DIETRICHSTEIN: Charming. . . . But this brief sermon,—
Why do you make these willful faults in German?
It's foolery. . . .
MARIE-LOUISE: Skylarking! Is it regal,
At your age, son?
THE DUKE: Why not? I'm not an eagle.
DIETRICHSTEIN (*underscoring an error with his thumbnail*):
You still write France as feminine.
THE DUKE: Alas!
I never know if it's *der, die,* or *das.*
DIETRICHSTEIN: The neuter only is correct.
THE DUKE: Perchance.
—Neuter seems not a thing to say of France.
MARIE-LOUISE (*interrupting* THALBERG, *who is at the piano*):
Music is my son's horror.
THE DUKE: My horror!
LORD COWLEY (*approaching the* DUKE): Highness . . .
DIETRICHSTEIN (*aside to the* DUKE): A civil word.
THE DUKE: Hein?

DIETRICHSTEIN (*whispers*): The Ambassador
From England.
LORD COWLEY: You rode as if subpoena
A while ago. Where from?
THE DUKE: From Saint Helena.
LORD COWLEYS You rode as if subpoena
THE DUKE: A pleasant place at evening,—calm, green, fair,
Serene. I hope some day to see you there.
(*He bows and moves away.*)
GENTZ (*hurriedly to the Ambassador, as the* DUKE *moves off*):
In Hellenthal . . . I trust you understood. . . .
It's the show village of the neighborhood.
LORD COWLEY: Ah! I believe. And with no wish to mock—
My garden has a stone so called.
GENTZ (*under his breath*): A rock!
VOICES: They're leaving.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*to* MARIE-LOUISE): Coming, Louise?
MARIE-LOUISE: No.
CRIES: Come, get in.
ARCHDUCHESS: You, Franz?
MARIE-LOUISE: My son hates nature. 'Tis a sin.
(*Pityingly*) He gallops till he crosses Hellenthal.
THE DUKE (*darkly*): I gallop, yes.
MARIE-LOUISE: No sentiment at all!
(*There are noisy farewells. The party leaves in a tumult of laughter and chattering.*)
MONTENEGRO (*already on the steps*):
Cider's the thing for all these country feasts.
(*His voice is lost.*)
CRIES (*without*): Good-bye—good-bye!
GENTZ (*on the balcony*): No hydra-headed beasts!
(*Laughter. Sound of wheels; the carriages drive away.*)
THERESA (*to* TIBURCE, *who is leaving*): Good-bye, my brother.
TIBURCE (*kissing her on the forehead*): Good-bye, dear.
(*He bows to* MARIE-LOUISE *and goes out with* BOMBELLES.)

MARIE-LOUISE (*to her* LADIES-IN-WAITING, *giving* THERESE *into their care*): And now
Show her her rooms.

(THERESE *goes out with the others. The* DUKE, *seated, abstractedly fingers a book on the table.* MARIE-LOUISE, *all smiles, makes a sign to* SCARAMPI, *who has remained; then she goes to the* DUKE.)

SCENE IX

The DUKE, MARIE-LOUISE, SCARAMPI; *later, a* TAILOR *and a* FITTER

MARIE-LOUISE: Franz!
(*He turns*) I'm going to make you cheerful.
THE DUKE: Mother, how?
(SCARAMPI *carefully closes all the doors.*)
MARIE-LOUISE: Hush! I have been plotting!
THE DUKE (*his eyes kindling*): Plotting?
MARIE-LOUISE: I might be convicted.
'Sh . . . everything from France is interdicted,
But I, Ah, secretly! from Paris brought
Two notables. (*She taps him gaily on the cheek*):
Smile, or it's all for naught.
'Sh! . . . for you, a tailor, . . . a modiste for us.
Truly, I think our plot is . . .
THE DUKE (*frozen again*): Marvellous.
SCARAMPI (*opening the door into* MARIE-LOUISE'S *apartments*):
Come in!

(*Enter a young girl, elegant as a dress-maker's dummy; she carries great pasteboard dress boxes and hat boxes; she is followed by a young man who looks exactly like a tailor's plate of* 1830; *his arms are piled high with garments and fabrics and boxes. The* TAILOR *comes toward the* DUKE, *while, back, the* FITTER *takes out some dresses, throwing them over the back of a sofa. After a profound bow, the* TAILOR *drops quickly on one knee and begins to open*

boxes, to unwrap parcels, to tie and puff cravats; to display his wares.)

THE TAILOR: If Monseigneur but deign to see
I have here all the latest modes. In me
All Paris trusts. 'Tis I indeed who set
The fashions. First, cravats; this violet,—
Languid. A grave maroon. Foulard is worn.
(*He looks at the* DUKE'S *tie.*)
I see his Highness with this gift was born,
To tie his scarf. . . .
(*Showing another model.*)
—A pure quincunx design.
(*Looking again at the tie.*)
Yes, it is perfect,—noble, careless, fine.
How does your Highness find this little vest
Lightly embroidered?

THE DUKE (*indifferently*): Ugly, like the rest.

THE TAILOR (*still spreading his wares*):
Can all this beauty leave your Highness cold?
This doe-skin vest? This fibre-tissue's fold?
This night-green coat? Observe the narrow cuff,
Very exclusive. Mark, this charming stuff;
Six buttons, three left open, latest touch;
This narrow cord should please you very much.
This dinner coat will ravish Paris soon,
Blue, worn with deepest jasper pantaloon,—
Restrained, yet dashing, very French in style.
No, not the yellow,—that is not worth while;
(Is Falstaff's doublet fit for Hamlet's wear?)
Here are our mantles, Prince. The plaid one there,
With half-low collar, sleeves thrown lightly back,—
A bit pronounced, I grant. This one in black,
A Rouliere, has a certain majesty,
Fit for a lover or Madrid grandee.
(*He throws it over his shoulders and marches about superbly.*)

Well made; a silver chain; a band of sable;
Montmartre's very best, both rich and stable
And yet so simple,—the Parisian touch.

MARIE-LOUISE (*who has remained near the* PRINCE, *seeing that he is paler and stares as if he were not listening to the* TAILOR): You tire his Highness. You have talked too much.

THE DUKE (*rousing himself*):

No, I was dreaming. Here, they do not use
—Vienna tailors,—adjectives profuse,
Terms picturesque and vivid, fitting, light,
All this . . . amusing, suitable and right. . . .
For you, it's just a tailor's cheap display,
For me, it's . . . .
(*His eyes full of tears, he speaks brusquely.*)
Please, Mother, go away.

MARIE-LOUISE (*going back to* SCARAMPI *and the* FITTER):

The dresses, now. What, leg o' mutton? Oh . . .

THE FITTER: Surely!

THE TAILOR (*showing the* DUKE *a book of samples*):

Wool . . . cashmere . . . Marengo?

THE DUKE: Marengo?

THE TAILOR (*rubbing the sample between his fingers*):

All wool and durable and nothing newer.

THE DUKE: Sir, you are right. Marengo will endure.

THE TAILOR: What is your order?

THE DUKE: I need nothing now.

THE TAILOR: One always needs becoming clothes, I vow.

THE DUKE: I'd like one combination . . .

THE TAILOR: Only name
. . . The client's fancy is our chiefest aim . . .
The tint, the fabric, ours the art. Speak, pray,
—We costume great Theophile Gautier.

THE DUKE (*with the air of one seeking an idea*): Let's see.

THE FITTER (*in the background, showing huge hats which* MARIE-LOUISE *tries on before the cheval glass*):

Fine rice straw, with a scarf, . . . all fair.
It's not a hat that everyone could wear.
THE DUKE (*dreamily*): Ah, can you make it?
THE TAILOR (*eagerly*): Anything.
THE DUKE: A . . .
THE TAILOR: What you will,
Your Highness.
THE DUKE: Coat.
THE TAILOR: Yes.
THE DUKE: Of cloth . . . or better still
Of broadcloth, very plain.
THE TAILOR: I see . . . you mean . . .
THE DUKE: Colour . . . let's see. What do you think of . . . green?
THE TAILOR: Good, excellent.
THE DUKE: A little coat of green,
Showing the waistcoat just . . .
THE TAILOR (*taking notes*): Waistcoat seen. . . .
THE DUKE: To liven it a little, have I said
Red lining and red pipings?
THE TAILOR (*a little startled*): Highness, red?—
THE DUKE: Ah, well . . . the vest . . .
How shall we have the waistcoat? . . .
THE TAILOR (*trying to think of the right shade*):
What is best? . . .
THE DUKE: It is white.
THE TAILOR: Your Highness has an eye.
THE DUKE: Another hint,
Knee breeches.
THE TAILOR: Highness?
THE DUKE: Yes.
THE TAILOR (*resignedly*): Well, of what tint?
THE DUKE: I think . . . I see . . . them . . . white, silk cassimere.
THE TAILOR: White always is the choicest fashion, sir.
THE DUKE: Buttons engraved.
THE TAILOR: Engraved? It's hardly legal . . .

THE DUKE: Yes . . . something . . . let me see . . . a tiny eagle.

THE TAILOR (*suddenly understanding what is this little green coat that the* PRINCE *orders, trembles and says huskily*):
A little . . .

THE DUKE (*changing his tone, shortly*: Well, sir, what? That shaky hand . . .
Tailor, you find this suit that I have planned
A thing too strange, a thing to make afraid?
You boast no more that you can have it made?

THE FITTER (*back*):
A sweet calash; these poppies . . . lovely tone.

THE DUKE (*rising*): Then, tailor, take away these things you've shown,
Put up your samples, whether gay or grave.
That little suit, and that alone, I'll have.

THE TAILOR (*coming nearer*): But I . . .

THE DUKE: Enough. Be gone. And do not tell. . . .

THE TAILOR: But . . .

THE DUKE (*with a gesture of despair*): It would not suit me.

THE TAILOR (*suddenly abandoning his tradesman's manner*):
It would suit you well!

THE DUKE (*haughtily, turning*): You said . . .

THE TAILOR: I said it would suit.

THE DUKE: Does your manner border
On insolence?

THE TAILOR: I am empowered to take your order.

THE DUKE: Ah!
(*Silence. They look each other in the eyes.*)

THE TAILOR: Yes.

THE FITTER (*back, trying a mantle on* MARIE-LOUISE, *who examines its effect in the mirror*):
A Chinese grosgrain, Madam. One perceives
Embroidered lining; elephant-ear sleeves.

THE DUKE (*a little ironically*): Ah? Ah?

THE TAILOR: Yes, Monseigneur.

THE DUKE: I see, I see.
Your quoting Shakespeare now is clear to me.
THE TAILOR: That olive coat has names beneath its shawl,
Marshals, a peer, schools, deputies, and all.
THE FITTER (*back*): A satin skirt, spencer of jaconette.
THE TAILOR: To aid your flight.
THE DUKE (*coldly*): It is not settled yet,
For I must go, before we turn the trick
For counsel to my master Metternich.
THE TAILOR (*smiling*): You will be less distrustful when you know
It is your cousin . . .
THE DUKE: Hein?
THE TAILOR: 'Tis even so,
The Countess Camerata. . . .
THE DUKE: Eliza's child?
THE TAILOR: She who delights to seem untamed and wild,
Unarmoured Amazon whose proud young face
Is living seal of her exalted race;
Fences; breaks thoroughbreds; dares anything.
THE FITTER (*back*): This organdie is quite too ravishing.
THE TAILOR: This Penthesilea when one receives . . .
FITTER: The collar's only basted, and the sleeves . . .
THE TAILOR: She leads this plot of which I tell you.
THE DUKE: God!
The proof of that?
THE TAILOR: A glance, the merest nod . . .
. . . Don't let them mark you . . . at that girl you see
Kneeling, unpacking dresses.
THE DUKE: It is she!
Once, at Vienna, where she saw me stand
Swiftly she dropped her cloak and kissed my hand,
And ran off, crying, "None shall say me nay.
I greet my Emperor's son whom I obey."
A Bonaparte . . . some likeness too is there . . .
Yes, but she has not, she, this yellow hair! . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*turning toward her rooms, to the* FITTER): We must try on these pretty costumes, yes.

(*To her son, enthusiastically*) Ah, Franz, in Paris only people dress!

THE DUKE: Yes, mother.

MARIE-LOUISE (*stopping, trembling*): Do you like Parisian style?

THE DUKE (*very gravely*): Dressing in Paris seems to me worth while.

(MARIE-LOUISE, SCARAMPI, *and the young girl enter her apartments, with dresses to be fitted.*)

SCENE X

The DUKE, *the* YOUTH; *later, for a moment, the* COUNTESS CAMERATA

THE DUKE (*as the door closes, turning eagerly to the young man*): Who then are you?

THE YOUNG MAN: Nothing, a nameless youth,
(*His manner is very romantic*)
Weary of living, lacking glorious truth;
Of smoking pipes and praising the Ideal.
What am I? I know not. There's nothing real.
Am I? I would be, were the charges light!
I read from Hugo, loving to recite
Ode to the Column, . . . all this, I declare,
Because . . . Lord, Lord! It's youth! It's in the air!
I bore myself, Oh with extravagance;
I am an artist, Highness, and Young France.
And carbonaro, at your service, sir.
Being always bored, at times I quite prefer
A startling waistcoat, crimson more or less;
A pretty taste in neckcloths I profess;
Having this taste, an idler and a railer,
They chose me for this plot to play the tailor.
I add,—you see how true the metal rings,—

I am a liberal and the foe of kings.
My life, my sword, your Highness, are your own.

THE DUKE: I like you, sir, but not your crazy tone.

THE YOUNG MAN (*smiles; then says less theatrically*):
No, do not judge me by these oddities.
Sometimes I'm driven to follies such as these,
But to real malady I'm not a stranger.
I seek the only anodyne, in danger.

THE DUKE (*dreaming*): Sickness?

THE YOUNG MAN: A sick disgust.

THE DUKE: A leaden soul. . . .

THE YOUNG MAN: And flights that fall. . . .

THE DUKE: Desires that lack a goal, . . .
And morbid pride in so much suffering, . . .
The touching pallor so much thought can bring! . . .

THE YOUNG MAN: Highness!

THE DUKE: And scorn for any fool that looks content.

THE YOUNG MAN: Your Highness!

THE DUKE: Doubt . . .

THE YOUNG MAN: Ah, sir, what books
Have taught your youth so well to understand?
'Tis what I feel!

THE DUKE: Why give me, then, your hand!
As a young tree, transplanted and alone,
Feels in its rising sap the forest's moan
And feels the gust that sways its far-off trees,
Not knowing you, I yet have known all these,—
Felt in my very blood the same mischance
That makes the restless sorrow of Young France.

THE YOUNG MAN: You feel it first, and then we plainer folk.
—Whence falls on you this all-too-heavy cloak?
O child its glory you both own and lack,
Pale Prince, so pale, with your cravat of black,
Whence is your pallor?

THE DUKE: That I am his son!

THE YOUNG MAN: Ah, well, weak, feverish, restless, every one,

Murmuring like you, what is there left to do?
—We are, in part, your father's children too.

THE DUKE (*putting his hand on his shoulder*):
You are his soldiers' children. That's as fine!
You bear a burden scarce less great than mine.
It makes me bolder. I can say, you see,
"They're only soldiers' sons. And so, maybe,
Will be contented with the Emperor's son."
(*At this moment, the door of* MARIE-LOUISE'S *apartment opens, and the* COUNTESS CAMERATA *enters, seeming to search for something.*)

THE COUNTESS (*calling*): The scarf? (*in a low voice*)
The selling's nearly done.

THE DUKE (*in a whisper, hurriedly*): Thank you.

THE COUNTESS: I wish my stock in trade were swords!
I hate to play the doll, with puppet's words!

THE DUKE: Brave one, I know!

MARIE-LOUISE (*within*): The scarf?

THE COUNTESS (*raising her voice*): I had it here;
I'm looking . . .

THE DUKE (*taking her hand*): A slender hand, that grips I hear,
A riding crop.

THE COUNTESS (*smiling*): I love a restive horse.

THE DUKE: You use the foils?

THE COUNTESS: The sabre, too! Of course!

THE DUKE: Ready for anything?

THE COUNTESS (*in a voice to be heard through the half-open door*): Where did it fall?
(*Low, to the* DUKE)
Ready, your Royal Highness, yes, for all.

THE DUKE: Cousin, a lion's heart is like your own!

THE COUNTESS: I bear a great name.

THE DUKE: What?

THE COUNTESS: Napoleone!

SCARAMPI (*within*): You haven't found it?

THE COUNTESS: No.

VOICE OF MARIE-LOUISE (*impatiently*): On the harpsichord.
THE COUNTESS (*whispering and withdrawing*):
I go. Complete the plan. You have my word!
(*She gives a little cry as if she had found the scarf, which she takes from the front of her dress where she had hidden it.*) At last!
VOICE OF SCARAMPI: You have it?
THE COUNTESS: It was on the harp.
(*She goes into the chamber, saying*) You full it, so; that line was rather sharp.
(*The door is closed.*)
THE YOUNG MAN (*coming forward eagerly*): So you accept?
THE DUKE (*calm*): I do not grasp it all,
. . . Bonapartism of a liberal.
THE YOUNG MAN (*smiling*): Republican, you see . . .
THE DUKE: The long way home!
THE YOUNG MAN: All roads lead, Highness, to the King of Rome!
My red, fast crimson once, I could have sworn,
Has faded . . .
THE DUKE (*ironically*): In what sunshine was it worn?
THE YOUNG MAN: The sun of Austerlitz. Young blood must thrill.
We fight no battles, but we tell them still.
The blood is staunched; the glory glows the more!
All words imperial spell the Emperor!
He has the victory arms could never give!
His soldiers perish, but his poets live.
THE DUKE: In short . . .
THE YOUNG MAN: In short . . . the times . . . the exiled god . . .
Your touching fate . . . a mind that hates to plod . . .
All these combined . . .
THE DUKE: In short, sir, you, as artist,
Thought it was . . . pretty . . . to be Bonapartist.
THE YOUNG MAN (*taken aback*): Hein? You accept?

THE DUKE: No.
THE YOUNG MAN: What?
THE DUKE: I listened well,
And they are charming, all these things you tell,
It was not France. Her voice is true and pure.
It's just a passing form of literature!
THE YOUNG MAN (*desolated*):
My maladroitness proves your overthrow!
The Countess could convince you, surely.
THE DUKE: No.
Her bold, bright spirit is a joy to see,
But she's not France,—she's just my family!
Another day will offer me this choice,
When your appeal will find another voice,
The people's ruder voice, to make me tremble.
But you, young Byron, whom I so resemble,—
It's not your failure. Go without regret.
I am not ready to be Emperor yet!

SCENE XI

The Same. The COUNTESS; *later,* DIETRICHSTEIN

THE COUNTESS (*who coming out of the apartments of* MARIE-LOUISE *hears the last words, stricken*): Not ready? (*She half turns and says vivaciously through the half-closed door to* MARIE-LOUISE and SCARAMPI):
It's decided. . . . I'll reserve
The white dress for this evening, not the mauve.
(*To the* DUKE) Not ready? What do you need?
THE DUKE: A year of dreams,
Of work . . .
THE COUNTESS (*fiercely*): Come, reign!
THE DUKE: Unripe my forehead seems!
THE COUNTESS: Crowns ripen brows that wear their royal stamp.

THE DUKE (*indicating his work table*):
The golden crown cast by a student's lamp!
THE YOUNG MAN: Now is your chance!
THE DUKE (*turning, haughtily*): My opportunity?
The tailor comes again?
THE COUNTESS: But . . .
THE DUKE (*firmly*): It is not to be!
I, lacking genius, grip my sense of rights.
I still demand three hundred sleepless nights!
THE YOUNG MAN (*in despair*): This will confirm the gossip of the street!
THE COUNTESS: They said that your defection is complete!
THE YOUNG MAN: You are Young France. They think you Austrian.
THE COUNTESS: They say your soul is weakened . . .
THE YOUNG MAN: By the plan
Of all your teachers.
THE COUNTESS: That you do not know
Your Father's story.
THE DUKE (*turning*): What? They dare say so?
THE YOUNG MAN: What can we say?
THE DUKE (*violently*): Answer . . .
(*A door opens; enter* DIETRICHSTEIN. *The* DUKE, *turning to him, very naturally*) Dear Count, come in.
DIETRICHSTEIN (*announcing his instructor in history*):
Obenhaus, sir.
THE DUKE: I'm ready to begin.
(DIETRICHSTEIN *goes out.*)
THE DUKE (*pointing to the scattered samples from the boxes*):
Move very slowly; pack the garments neatly,
And, for the rest, efface yourselves completely.
(*As* DIETRICHSTEIN *returns with* OBENHAUS; *to* OBENHAUS)
Good day, dear Baron.
(*To the* COUNTESS *and the* YOUNG MAN, *waving them aside*) Pack them promptly, please.

(*To* OBENHAUS) My tailor.
OBENHAUS: Ah!
THE DUKE: The fitter brought all these
To show the Duchess.
OBENHAUS: Ah!
THE DUKE: They're in the way?
OBENHAUS (*who has seated himself at the table with* DIETRICHSTEIN): No, no!

SCENE XII

The DUKE, DIETRICHSTEIN, OBENHAUS, *and behind them, the* COUNTESS *and the* YOUNG MAN, *who, quietly and unobtrusively folding and packing, listen intently*

THE DUKE (*seating himself opposite his instructors*):
Sirs, at your service! Pencil sharpened, so
I'll miss no date nor any thought you drop.
OBENHAUS: Take up the lesson where we had to stop,
—In eighteen five.
THE DUKE: Yes, eighteen five.
OBENHAUS: We've seen
In eighteen six . . .
THE DUKE: Your pardon; do you mean
That nothing marked that year?
OBENHAUS: Hein? What? What date?
THE DUKE (*blowing away a speck of lead from his pencil sharpening*): Why, eighteen five.
OBENHAUS: Oh, yes . . . uh . . . that year, fate
Was cruel to the right, by some mischance,—
A year that merits but a passing glance.
(*He takes refuge in high-sounding words.*)
From history's heights, the thinker's view is clear.
THE DUKE: Then nothing special happened in that year?
OBENHAUS: Yes, an important thing, upon my word!
The ancient calendar was then restored . . .

A little later, England, you will gather
Provoked by Spain . . .

THE DUKE (*sweetly*): The Emperor, sir?

OBENHAUS: W—whom?

THE DUKE: My father.

OBENHAUS (*evasively*): He . . .

THE DUKE: Had he left Boulogne?

OBENHAUS: Oh, without doubt.

THE DUKE: Where was he, then?

OBENHAUS: Why . . . why . . . just hereabout.

THE DUKE (*with an air of astonishment*): Indeed!

DIETRICHSTEIN (*hurriedly*): Bavaria was his chief concern.

OBENHAUS (*trying to pass on*):
The Presburg treaty, you will shortly learn,
Conformed to that of Hapsburg . . . of Hapsburg.

THE DUKE: Now, what is that, this treaty of Presburg?

OBENHAUS (*vaguely*): It closed a period . . . a sort of joint Agreement . . .

THE DUKE (*looking at his pencil*): Ah! I seem to have lost the point.

OBENHAUS: In eighteen seven . . .

THE DUKE: Already? (*Tranquilly sharpening his pencil*)
Very well.
A curious epoch . . . not a thing to tell!

OBENHAUS: Oh, yes, Monseigneur; you must know, Bragance . . . The king . . .

THE DUKE (*more and more gently*): The Emperor, sir?

OBENHAUS: Which one?

THE DUKE: Of France?

OBENHAUS: Nothing important until eighteen eight.
The Tilsit treaty, I forgot to state . . .

THE DUKE (*innocently*): Nothing but treaties?

OBENHAUS (*trying to get on*): Yes, the State entire . . .
Europe. . . .

THE DUKE: A brief review?

OBENHAUS: Yes, I desire
To bring out . . .
THE DUKE: Nothing else?
OBENHAUS: Why . . .
THE DUKE: Tell me, pray.
OBENHAUS: I . . .
THE DUKE: What happened else? What happened else, I say?
OBENHAUS (*stammering*): Why . . . I don't know. . . .
You're jesting, Highness. . . . When . . .
THE DUKE (*rising*): You do not know? Why, I must tell you, then.
October sixth in eighteen five . . .
DIETRICHSTEIN *and* OBENHAUS (*get up in confusion*):
What? How?
THE DUKE: Having ceased to say, "We must expect him now,"
The eagle's wings are spread before he swoops,—
Vienna said, "Let London fear his troops!"
Having quit Kehl, the crossing safely done,
The Emperor . . .
OBENHAUS: Emperor?
THE DUKE: And you know which one!
Took Wurtemberg,—Baden's grand-duchy paid! . . .
DIETRICHSTEIN (*aghast*): My God!
THE DUKE: Gave Austria a morning serenade
With Murat's clarions and Soult's great drums;
At Wertingen, at Augsberg, certain crumbs,—
Mere tid-bits,—were his marshals' extra gain.
OBENHAUS: But, Highness! . . .
THE DUKE: He pursued the great campaign,
Sat before Ulm before he changed his shoes;
Bade Ney hold Elchingen; dispatched this news
In his own words, grave, awful, joyous, sober;
Prepared th' assault. That seventeenth October
Saw twenty Austrian regiments complete

And eighteen generals at this hero's feet.
The Emperor set forth . . .

DIETRICHSTEIN: Highness! . . .

THE DUKE (*in a voice that grows stronger and stronger*):
In November,
He slept at Schoenbrunn,—in my very chamber!

OBENHAUS: But . . .

THE DUKE: Pursued the foe and knew them in his hand;
Said in his camp: "To-morrow!" As he planned!
Next day he faced the line and told them all,
"Soldiers, to-day our thunderbolt shall fall."
The staff's vermilion, background for his gray,
The army all a-sea, he watched for day.
He saw that dawn from yon high promontory,
And smiling, set that sun in France's story.

OBENHAUS (*looking at* DIETRICHSTEIN): Dietrichstein!

THE DUKE: *That* happened!

DIETRICHSTEIN (*looking wildly at* OBENHAUS): Obenhaus!

THE DUKE (*walking up and down with waxing fervor*):
Death! Terror! Europe saw
Two emperors beaten by the Emperor!
Twenty thousand prisoners!

OBENHAUS (*following him*): I entreat!

DIETRICHSTEIN (*following*): Imagine if one heard!

THE DUKE: It was complete
Upon the lake swollen bodies floated black.
Grandfather sought my father's bivouac . . .

DIETRICHSTEIN: Monseigneur!

THE DUKE (*implacably*): His bivouac!

OBENHAUS: Be still!

THE DUKE: My father made the terms just at his will.

DIETRICHSTEIN: If any one . . .

THE DUKE: The colours captured there
Distributed made eight for Paris' share . . .

(*The* COUNTESS *and the* YOUNG MAN *have come from behind their screen, pale and trembling. They try to tiptoe*

out, without losing a word; in their emotion, they let some of their parcels fall with a clatter.)

OBENHAUS (*turning and seeing them*): Oh!

THE DUKE: Fifty to the Senate!

OBENHAUS: These strangers! Think of them!

DIETRICHSTEIN (*rushing at them*): Save yourselves if . . .

THE DUKE (*in a ringing voice*): Fifty for Notre Dame!

OBENHAUS: Good Lord!

THE DUKE (*in an ecstasy, with the gesture of one who distributes standards by thousands*): Oh, banners!

DIETRICHSTEIN (*hustling and pushing the* COUNTESS *and the* YOUNG MAN, *who are trying to pick up their parcels*):

Have you no sense, no manners?
Dresses and hats! Get out!

THE DUKE (*falling exhausted on a sofa*):

And banners, banners, banners!
(*The* COUNTESS *and the* YOUNG MAN *have gone out.*)

DIETRICHSTEIN: There the whole time!

THE DUKE (*in a paroxysm of coughing*): Banners!

DIETRICHSTEIN: A pretty mess!
Highness . . .

THE DUKE: I'll stop.

DIETRICHSTEIN: It's time, you must confess!
Metternich's fury! . . . And those strangers! . . . Oh!

THE DUKE (*wiping the sweat from his forehead*):

And anyway, I've told you all I know.
(*He coughs again*) Teacher . . .

DIETRICHSTEIN (*handing him a glass of water*): You're coughing. Drink this, sir, I pray.

THE DUKE (*after swallowing a little water*):

I knew my lesson rather well to-day?

DIETRICHSTEIN: No book has reached him and I know it well!

OBENHAUS: When Metternich knows this . . .

THE DUKE (*coldly*): You will not tell.
You would be blamed.

DIETRICHSTEIN (*aside, hurriedly to* OBENHAUS):

He's right. We'll tell no other.
To influence the Prince one has his mother.
(*He knocks at the door of* MARIE-LOUISE'S *apartments.*)
The Duchess?

SCARAMPI (*appearing at the door*): Is ready. Enter.
(DIETRICHSTEIN *goes in. The twilight deepens. A servant brings a lamp and puts it on the* DUKE'S *table.*)

THE DUKE (*to* OBENHAUS): Count, I hope you see
I knew your course *ad usum Delphini.*

OBENHAUS (*lifting his hands to heaven*): How did you
Learn? I cannot understand!

SCENE XIII

The DUKE, MARIE-LOUISE

(MARIE-LOUISE, *much agitated, enters, wearing a superb ball gown, her mantle thrown about her shoulders.* OBENHAUS *and* DIETRICHSTEIN *disappear.*)

MARIE-LOUISE: Goodness! What is it now? Franz, I demand
A full account of this.

THE DUKE (*showing her the twilight scene from his window*):
Dear Mother, see
The lovely light; birds twitter drowsily;
Gently the evening casts its golden hue;
The trees . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*arrested, surprised*): Are you a nature-lover, too?

THE DUKE: Maybe.

MARIE-LOUISE (*trying to be severe once more*):
You're going to explain . . .

THE DUKE: Breathe in
This fragrance, Mother. Why, the woods begin
To blossom in my room . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*growing cross*): I said explain.

THE DUKE (*very softly*): Each breeze brings in a branch; with every breath

—Oh miracle to madden a Macbeth!—
Not only does the forest march to me,
It swiftly dances in its ecstasy!
Borne on this sweet wind, lo, the forest flies!

MARIE-LOUISE (*looking at him half stupefied*): Poetic, Franz?

THE DUKE: Perhaps the word applies.
(*Dance music is heard in the distance*)
Listen . . . a waltz . . . banal, one may suppose,
Ennobled in its passing. Ah, who knows,
Crossing the wood where oft he walked alone,
By cyclamen, or brake or mossy stone,
It may have met Beethoven's spirit there
And set this sweetness vibrant in the air.

MARIE-LOUISE (*not able to believe her ears*): And music, too?

THE DUKE: Yes, Mother, when I will;—
But I will not! Why should I ache and thrill
At perfume, beauty, music, mystery?
I've something blonde within that frightens me.

MARIE-LOUISE: That something, son, is me. I feel so, too.

THE DUKE: I would not think . . .

MARIE-LOUISE: You hate it?

THE DUKE: I love you!

MARIE-LOUISE (*fretfully*): Then think how badly you behave to me.
Metternich and my father couldn't be
More generous if they tried. That silly writ
Made you a count. I wouldn't hear of it.
I said, "A duke, at least." So those sweet men
Have made you Duke of Reichstadt.

THE DUKE (*reciting*): Of Gross-Bohen
Buchtierah, Tirnovan, Kron-Pornitz . . . chen.
(*He affects to have trouble with the pronunciation.*)
If I pronounce ill, pardon.

MARIE-LOUISE (*crosser than ever*): You'll confess
'Twas awkward to adjust your nobleness.
The writ was courteous, prudent and exact;

Those dear men did it all with perfect tact.
For you to be ungrateful is a shame.
No one so much as spoke your father's name.

THE DUKE: They might have written: "Father's name unknown."

MARIE-LOUISE: You may be, with your income, when you're grown,
The best liked prince in Austria, by far,
The richest.

THE DUKE: Richest. . . .

MARIE-LOUISE: Most popular. . . .

THE DUKE: In Austria!

MARIE-LOUISE: Taste your good luck!

THE DUKE: I've sucked its sweetness out!

MARIE-LOUISE: Only the archdukes rank you. Beyond doubt.
You can espouse a princess, certainly . . .
Or an archduchess at the least.

THE DUKE (*in a voice suddenly deep with earnestness*): I see,
As once, a child, I saw,—in a vast room
A little throne, back rounded like a drum;
—Helena brightened what was golden then,—
Carved on that back a little, simple N.
—The letter that says No! to time.

MARIE-LOUISE: But . . .

THE DUKE: And again
I see kings' shoulders branded with that N.

MARIE-LOUISE (*recoiling*): The kings whose blood flows through my veins in you!

THE DUKE: I do not need their blood. What can it do?

MARIE-LOUISE: That famous heritage!

THE DUKE: Not worth a thought!

MARIE-LOUISE: The blood of Charles the Fifth, you count that naught?

THE DUKE: So many others have that royal sign;
But when I say in my veins,—just in mine,—

Blood of a Corsican lieutenant flows,
I weep upon my hands wherein it goes.

MARIE-LOUISE: Franz!

THE DUKE: That young blood is but hurt by ancient blood.
I wish my veins could lose their weakening flood.

MARIE-LOUISE: Be silent!

THE DUKE: What more is there to say? Yet I am sure
Some day the young blood will be wholly pure.
The two streams fight in me. And have no doubt
That yours,—as always,—will be put to rout.

MARIE-LOUISE: Peace, Duke of Reichstadt!

THE DUKE: Metternich—fool!—did that.
"Duke," on my life's page written,—"of Reichstadt."
Held up and made transparent in the sun
The mark is still, is still—"Napoleon!"

MARIE-LOUISE (*recoiling*): My child!

THE DUKE (*going close to her*): Duke of Reichstadt, you say.
Oh, no.
Nay, listen to the name I'll not forego.
The crowd at Prater graved upon my heart,
My own true name,—"The little Bonaparte."
I am his son! his son!
(*He grips her by the shoulders.*)

MARIE-LOUISE: You hurt me, Franz!

THE DUKE (*loosing his hold and clasping her in his arms*):
O, Mother, darling!
(*Then with the tenderest, most pitiful gentleness*)
Hurry to the dance.
(*The orchestra is faintly heard in the distance*)
Forget my frenzy,—my delirium;
Forget it, darling. Or at least be dumb
Even to Metternich . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*already a little reassured*): I needn't say . . . ?

THE DUKE: I hear a lovely waltz not far away.
No, tell him nothing. It will be a boon . . .
You will forget . . . you, who forget so soon!

MARIE-LOUISE: But I. . . .

THE DUKE (*talking gently as if she were a child, and softly pushing her toward the door*):

Think about Parma; Salla's palace fine;—
Your happy times. That forehead, Mother mine,
Was never meant for shadows thrown above you.
—O Mother, if you knew how much I love you!
Don't worry, dear, not even . . . God! . . . to be
Faithful! I can be that for you and me.
(*Playfully*) I'm going to keep on pushing till you go.
Don't get your feet wet in the moss. And so
(*Kissing her on the brow*)
I'll kiss away your worries, every one.
A charming head-dress.

MARIE-LOUISE (*eagerly*): Do you think so, son?

THE DUKE: The carriage waits. The night is fine. One other;
(*He kisses her again*) That's for good night. Be gay!
(MARIE-LOUISE *goes out. He comes forward, trembling, and almost falls into the big chair by his writing table, his head in his hands.*)
O poor, poor Mother!
(*Changing his tone he draws his books and papers toward him; adjusts the lamp.*)
Come; let's to work!
(*The carriage is heard to drive off. The door, back, opens mysteriously and one discovers* GENTZ *leading in a woman, closely veiled.*)

SCENE XIV

The DUKE, FANNY ELSSLER; GENTZ, *for an instant*

GENTZ (*listens and then, whispering*): They're gone! (*he calls*) Prince!

THE DUKE (*turning and seeing the shrouded figure*): Fanny!

FANNY ELSSLER (*throwing off the mantle which she has thrown over her dancer's costume, appears, pink and glowing, in*

theatrical costume, and standing on tiptoe, holds out her arms): Franz!

GENTZ (*retiring*): The dreams of Empire haven't half a chance!

FANNY (*in the* DUKE'S *arms*): Franz!

GENTZ (*going out*): Perfect . . .

FANNY (*arduously*): My Franz!

(*The door is closed upon* GENTZ. FANNY *instantly withdraws from the* DUKE'S *embrace, and respectfully curtsies.*)

FANNY: Your Highness!

THE DUKE (*listening*): He is gone.
Quickly!

FANNY (*with a dancer's grace pirouettes and with a light bound lands in a sitting posture on the table*): I learned so much to-day!

THE DUKE (*seating himself at the table*): Go on! Go on!

(FANNY *puts her hand very lightly on the* DUKE'S *bowed head, then, slowly, wrinkling her pretty forehead to remember difficult points, she begins in the tone of one who takes up a recitation that has been interrupted.*)

FANNY: That night, a forced march under General Ney
Was covered by Gazan. . . .

THE DUKE (*passionately repeating, to carve the name on his memory*):
Gazan!

FANNY: And by Suchet. . . .

THE DUKE: Suchet!

FANNY: The cannonading was prolonged and hard.
At early daybreak, the Imperial Guard. . . .

(*The curtain falls*)

ACT II

Fluttering Wings

A year later at the palace of Schoenbrunn.

The Lacquered Hall. All the walls are covered with ancient lacquer work, whose gleaming black panels decorated with little landscapes, kiosques, birds or tiny gold figures are framed in carved, gilded wood of heavy and sumptuous German rococo. The cornice is made of tiny pieces of lacquer, the doors are lacquer, and the supports are made of small and very precious bits of lacquer.

Back, between two lacquered panels, a high window has a deep lacquered embrasure. Open, it gives a view of the balcony and the light from the park throws into relief the black eagle with two heads of wrought iron.

One has a wide view of the park of Schoenbrunn. Between the high clipped hedges, where statues are placed, are spread the formal beds of a French garden, and at the end of the parterres and beyond the fountain on a grassy mound, its white arch outlined against the blue, the Gloriette is raised toward the sky.

Two doors, right; two, left.

Between the doors, two heavy pier-tables stand opposite each other. Beyond these consoles in gilded frames surmounted by the imperial crown, two haughty portraits of Austrian ancestors.

This serves as salon to the apartment occupied by the Duke of Reichstadt *in a wing of the palace.*

The two doors on the left open on his chamber which is the very one used by Napoleon the First when—twice—he occupied Schoenbrunn.

The two doors on the right open on the entrance to the salon from without.

The PRINCE *has made it his work room—a great table covered with books and plans, a huge map of Europe half unrolled. About the table several armchairs borrowed from the neighboring Gobelin Zimmer, mediocre gilded wood covered with admirable tapestries. In the foreground, left, a cheval glass a little catacornered, the black lacquered frame only showing. On the pier-table at the left reverently ranged: a French grenadier's cap, red epaulettes, a sabre, a cartridge box, etc., on the wall opposite an old musket and white shoulder-belt, a fixed bayonet.*

On the other pier-table, nothing.

In a corner on a stand an enormous box. Everywhere books, elegant side arms, riding crops, hunting whips, etc.

As the curtain rises, a dozen servants are ranged in line before COUNT SEDLINSKY. *He questions them.*

An Usher stands near him.

SCENE I

SEDLINSKY, *the* LACKEYS, *the* USHER

SEDLINSKY (*in an armchair*): Nothing abnormal?
FIRST LACKEY: No, sir.
SEDLINSKY: Then that's all?
SECOND LACKEY: Yes, sir.
THIRD LACKEY: Eats little.
FOURTH LACKEY: Reads much.
FIFTH LACKEY: Hardly sleeps at all.
SEDLINSKY (*to the* USHER):
Servants all tested to your best belief?
THE USHER: They are policemen all, and you as Chief,
Know their good record.
SEDLINSKY: Thank you. But I fear
The Duke returning may surprise me here.
FIRST LACKEY: He has gone out, sir.
SECOND LACKEY: Always, sun or storm.
THIRD LACKEY: Surrounded by his staff.
FOURTH LACKEY: In uniform.

THE USHER: Always manoeuvres!
SEDLINSKY: Well . . . be adroit . . . a spy
Must watch but not seem watchful.
THE USHER (*smiling*): I am sly.
SEDLINSKY: No zeal. A zealous servant makes me tremble.
Don't all rush to one keyhole. Wait. Dissemble.
THE USHER: That is a care I trust to only one.
SEDLINSKY: Which one?
THE USHER: The Piedmontese.
SEDLINSKY: That's wisely done.
THE USHER: Yes, every hour his Highness keeps his room,
This fellow stands here,—watching.
(*He points toward the door leading to the* DUKE'S *chamber.*)
SEDLINSKY: Has he come?
THE USHER: No, sir. All night he has to stand and stare;
By day he dozes in an easy chair.
He will be here when once the Duke comes.
SEDLINSKY: Good!
See that he watches well.
THE USHER: That's understood.
We are faithful. Can you ask it?
SEDLINSKY (*glancing at the table*): Papers?
USHER: Examined.
SEDLINSKY (*leaning down and looking under the table*):
This waste paper basket?
(*He kneels excitedly, seeing tiny scraps of paper around the basket.*)
Pieces of paper? (*He tries to put them together.*)
Letters perhaps. Now who . . . ?
(*More and more carried away by professional curiosity, he crawls completely under the table. At this moment R, a door opens, and the* DUKE *enters, followed by his military household*—GENERAL HARTMANN, CAPTAIN FORESTI, *etc. The* DUKE *is in uniform; white coat, buttoned to the green collar; silver bear-claws on the sleeves; a great white military cloak over his shoulders. A black bicorne with a*

green oak-leaf. On the breast two medallions, a miniature of MARIE-THERESE, *and one of* SAINTE ETIENNE. *Besides the sabre belt, a silk girdle of black and yellow silk with heavy tassels. Boots.*

SCENE II

The DUKE, SEDLINSKY, *The* ARCHDUCHESS, *The* DOCTOR, FORESTI, DIETRICHSTEIN

THE DUKE (*very naturally, glancing at the two legs which alone appear beyond the table*):

Why, Master Sedlinsky, how d'y do?

SEDLINSKY (*appearing, aghast, on all fours*): Highness!

THE DUKE: Forgive the intrusion. All is yours.

SEDLINSKY (*standing*): How did you know me? I was . . .

THE DUKE: On all fours?

I recognized you easily.

(*He sees the* ARCHDUCHESS, *who enters hastily. She wears a garden costume, with a wide-brimmed straw hat; under her arm is an album sumptuously bound, which she puts on the table with her parasol. She seems alarmed. The* DUKE *seeing her, nervously*): O, dear,

They have frightened you.

THE ARCHDUCHESS: They said . . .

THE DUKE: No cause for fear.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*taking his hand*): Nevertheless.

THE DUKE (*seeing* DIETRICHSTEIN, *who enters also hurriedly with an anxious air and brings with him* DR. MALFATTI):

The Doctor! I'm not ill. (*To the* ARCHDUCHESS)

A fit of coughing—I had shouted orders till

I brought it on.

(*To the* DOCTOR, *who while he speaks has been taking his pulse*) Doctor, you are a bore.

(*To* SEDLINSKY, *who in the excitement has moved toward the door*)

So good of you to straighten up my papers. More

Of your indulgence. You spoil me. I demur;
Your friends to serve me . . .

SEDLINSKY (*shocked*): Do you fancy, sir . . . ?

THE DUKE: Indeed, for all this spoiling makes one wilful,
I'd like it if your lackeys were more skillful.
They dress me badly, all my neckcloths mount,
And—since it's your department, my dear Count,—
You stickle so for order to the letter,
Please have them brush my boots a little better.
(*He has seated himself and is taking off his gloves, having handed his sabre and his hat to an orderly who carries them out. A lackey has placed a plate of refreshments on the table.*)

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*wishing to serve him*): Franz . . .

THE DUKE (*to* SEDLINSKY, *who again is trying to make his escape*): You take nothing?

SEDLINSKY: I have taken . . .

THE DOCTOR: Liberties.

THE DUKE (*to one of the officers of his household*):
Orders, Foresti.

CAPTAIN FORESTI (*advancing and saluting*): Colonel?

THE DUKE: If you please
Manoeuvres at Gros-hafen, as I planned,
At daybreak, two days hence.

CAPTAIN FORESTI: As you command,
My Colonel.

THE DUKE (*to the other officers*):
You may leave me, gentlemen.
(*He salutes them. His staff retires.* SEDLINSKY *tries to disappear with the officer.*)
Dear Count . . .
(SEDLINSKY *turns back. The* DUKE *holds out to him by his finger tips a letter which he has taken from his inside pocket.*) Here's one you haven't read.
(SEDLINSKY, *looking harried, places the letter on the table and makes his escape.*)

DIETRICHSTEIN (*to the* DUKE): You find it then,
Advisable to show severity?
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*to* DIETRICHSTEIN):
The Duke is not, then, quite at liberty?
DIETRICHSTEIN: Oh, the Duke is not a prisoner, but . . .
THE DUKE: Indeed,
I like that "but"; so well it serves the need.
My God, I'm not a prisoner, *but* . . . Just that.
But . . . Not a prisoner, *but.* 'Tis very pat.
A prisoner? Not for a moment. No.
But watchers dog my footsteps as I go.
Prisoner? No. The thing is foolish talk,
But if, far down the park I chance to walk
There's not a leaf but hides a careful eye.
Surely no prisoner, *but* just let me try
To speak behind closed doors with no one near,
That mushroom there would sprout a listening ear.
I'm not a prisoner, *but* whene'er I ride
An unseen escort is my courteous guide.
A prisoner? The very thought's infernal
But I'm the second to peruse my Journal.
I'm not a prisoner, *but* . . . each night one places
A lackey at my door . . .
(*Pointing to a tall, grizzled fellow who comes to remove the plate, and is crossing the hall at the moment.*)
That one, who passes.
The Duke of Reichstadt, prisoner? Tut, oh, tut!
A prisoner? I'm *not-a-prisoner-but.*
DIETRICHSTEIN (*rather caught*): I approve this gaiety. It's rare.
THE DUKE: Rarissime.
DIETRICHSTEIN (*saluting, as he leaves*): Your Highness . . .
THE DUKE (*gravely*): Serenissime.
DIETRICHSTEIN: Hein?
THE DUKE: . . . Re . . . nis . . . sime!
The title was conferred. My heart is set
On having it. You'll kindly not forget.
DIETRICHSTEIN (*bowing*): I leave you. (*He goes out.*)

SCENE III

The DUKE, *The* ARCHDUCHESS

THE DUKE (*bitterly*): Serenissime? Hein? I revel
In that. (*He throws himself into an armchair. Seeing the album*) What have you?
THE ARCHDUCHESS: The Emperor's specimens.
THE DUKE: The devil!
Grandpa's herbarium!
(*He takes it, and opens it on his lap.*)
THE ARCHDUCHESS: He lent it me
This morning.
THE DUKE (*looking at the binding*): It is fine.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*showing him a page*): You scholar, see
What is this monster, dried and black?
THE DUKE: A rose.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: You have some trouble, dear, that no one knows.
THE DUKE: Bengalensis.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Of Bengal!
THE DUKE (*congratulating her*): Bravo!
THE ARCHDUCHESS: I find you nervous. Are you ill, Franz?
THE DUKE: No.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Ah, I know! They sent away your friend,
Enthusiast, unable to pretend,
Prokesch. They thought he fed your dreams.
THE DUKE: But in his stead they send me, as it seems,
Marshal Marmont, despised throughout the world. Here, rather,
He wins a welcome who betrayed my father.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Tut!
THE DUKE: And the creature hopes to end with this
Poisoning the son's mind . . .
(*With a violent gesture.*) Oh!
(*Instantly regaining his self-command he looks at the herbarium again and, smiling, reads aloud*):
Volubilis.

THE ARCHDUCHESS: Highness,—if I extort a promise now,
You'd surely keep it as a sacred vow?

THE DUKE (*kissing her hand*):
An easy promise,—seeing what I owe . . .

THE ARCHDUCHESS: Then my mid-August present pleased you so?

THE DUKE (*rising and indicating the objects carefully placed on the console at the left*):
These treasures, from the Archduke's trophy store.
(*He touches each one.*) Tinder box, guard's cap, gun . . .
(*Smiling as the* ARCHDUCHESS *shrinks a little*)
. . . unloaded. . . . And Oh! More.
Than all the rest . . .

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*hurriedly*): 'Sh!

THE DUKE: The thing I have hidden.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*smiling*): Where,
Where, bandit?

THE DUKE (*pointing to his chamber*): Very safely, in my lair.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*it is her turn, sitting at the table, to turn the pages of the herbarium*):
Promise . . . you know the Emperor's gentleness . . .

THE DUKE (*picking up a paper that falls from the herbarium*):
What's this that's fallen? Orders, nothing less . . .
(*He reads*) *"If student demonstrations should recur*
Wholesale arrests; hard duty" . . . (*to the* ARCHDUCHESS)
You refer
To . . . gentleness?

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*fluttering the pages*): The Emperor loves you, dear.
His kindness . . .

THE DUKE (*picking up another scrap that has fallen from the herbarium; reading*):
"If student insubordination press,
Charge with fixed bayonets." . . . His kindness, yes?

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*nervously*):

An old man fears new movements mean new trouble.
He is a kind old man.

THE DUKE: That's true, . . . but double!
(*Closing the herbarium*)
O withered flowers from which harsh judgments come
The Emperor Franz and his herbarium!
Yet he's beloved . . . He knows his people's heart,
I love him well.

ARCHDUCHESS: And he can take your part.

THE DUKE: Ah, if he would!

THE ARCHDUCHESS: Promise you will not fly
Till you have asked of him.

THE DUKE (*offering his hand*): I promise. Aye.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*having made her cast of the dice, breathes as if reassured*): Why that's well done.
(*Then gaily*) You've earned my recompense.

THE DUKE (*smiling*): Yours, aunt?

THE ARCHDUCHESS: One has a little influence.
And this Prokesch of whom you've been deprived,—
I talked . . . I worked . . . In short, he has arrived!
(*She taps the floor three times with her parasol. The door opens.* PROKESCH *appears.*)

THE DUKE (*running to him*): You! At last!
(*The* ARCHDUCHESS *withdraws while the two friends are absorbed in each other.*)

SCENE IV

The DUKE, PROKESCH

PROKESCH (*in a whisper, glancing suspiciously around*):
'Sh, someone might hear.

THE DUKE (*tranquilly, aloud*): They hear.
They hear, but don't repeat.

PROKESCH: What?

THE DUKE: Never fear.
To test the thing, I've spoken open treason.
Never a word reported.

PROKESCH: What's the reason?
THE DUKE: I think the listener paid by the police
Is deaf and thinks his chief was made to fleece.
PROKESCH (*eagerly*): The Countess? Nothing new?
THE DUKE: Nothing.
PROKESCH: Oh!
THE DUKE (*despairingly*): Not a sign!
She has forgotten me . . . been taken . . . or . . . in fine
I was a fool when I refused last year.
—No . . . for I was not ready!—Now I'm here,
Forgotten!
PROKESCH: Tut! (*he looks around*)
You work here? Charming.
THE DUKE: It's Chinese.
These gilded birds! These sly grotesqueries!
With mocking grins my very walls abound.
In the great Lacquered Chamber I am found,
That by its sombre blackground I may see
How white an Austrian uniform can be.
PROKESCH: Prince!
THE DUKE (*walking back and forth*):
Spies make my household, officer or page!
PROKESCH: How do you pass your time, my Prince?
THE DUKE: I rage.
PROKESCH (*going toward the balcony*):
I did not know Schoenbrunn.
THE DUKE: It is a grave.
PROKESCH (*looking*):
Against the sky, that Gloriette shines brave.
THE DUKE: I dream of glories, while the rest forget;—
—And for reality, this Gloriette!
PROKESCH (*coming back to him*):
At least you have this park, a place to ride.
THE DUKE: It's not enough.
PROKESCH: The valley, then, is wide.
THE DUKE: I'd gallop farther than the valley's end.

PROKESCH: Where would you ride?
THE DUKE: Across all Europe, friend.
PROKESCH (*trying to calm him*): Now, now, now!
THE DUKE: And when I lift a forehead all bedewed
With glories that my histories have reviewed,—
When I rise, dazzled, from old Plutarch's pages,
When I salute great Cæsar down the ages,
My father, Alexander, Hannibal . . .
A LACKEY (*presenting himself at the door, left*):
What suit, your Highness, for this evening's ball?
THE DUKE (*to* PROKESCH): You see!
(*To the servant*): I am not going out.
(*The lackey disappears.*)
PROKESCH (*turning over the pages of some books on the table*):
You read the books you choose?
THE DUKE: Yes. I no longer need
To learn from Fanny what she learned by heart.
Books came, from one who always takes my part.
PROKESCH (*smiling*): The good Archduchess?
THE DUKE: Yes, a book each day.
Ah, I was drunk with joy. I stole away
Early to bed to read them, and, you see,
To hide, I tossed them on the canopy!
So well its gloomy folds my books enclosed
A dome of History guarded while I dozed.
By day they rested quiet, but they crept,
Living and watchful, always while I slept;
And battles raged that ages since were ended!
And laurel leaves on my closed eyes descended.
Austerlitz slid along the curtain fold;
And Jena grasped the tassel meant to hold
And keep them back,—and captured all my dreams!
Then, one day, Metternich desired it seems
To teach my father's history, as *he* would!
I heard,—he thought, believed and understood.

—And in the very middle of his story,
That top fell, crushed beneath its weight of glory!
A hundred books, leaves fluttering from their fall,
Shouted one name.

PROKESCH: He stormed?

THE DUKE: Oh, not at all.
He gave me one of his suave bishop's looks,
"Why have so high a shelf to keep your books?"
And he went out. Now I read anything.

PROKESCH (*indicating a title*):
Even "The Man's Son?"

THE DUKE: Yes.

PROKESCH: An odious thing.

THE DUKE: Yes. This French book,—the hatred is unjust,—
Declares they poisoned me. Fate less august
Than that which slowly kills me day by day.
France, if thy Prince is dying, let them say
'Twas not a dagger nor a poisoned bowl
That kills the Duke of Reichstadt. 'Tis his soul!

PROKESCH: Monseigneur!

THE DUKE: 'Tis my soul . . . my name . . . that swells
With cannons' roar and with alarum bells.
Always they sound, and always sound my shame,
Cannons and bells that shout my awful name.
Peals, salvos! O, be still! Poison, they say?
To leave my prison 'twere too smooth a way.
(*He goes toward the window.*)
I would make history! And I live, alas!
A wistful child, face pressed against the glass!
(*He comes back to* PROKESCH.)
Sometimes I seek forgetfulness. Again,
I madly leap upon my horse and then
I've only one wild wish for speed, more speed,
To outride my dream, to kill my horse if need!
I turn my head away; the stately row

Of poplars, swiftly passing, tell me so
Of grenadiers' plumed bonnets in the wind.
I ride as if my name might drop behind,
And let me lose it; and I breathe the sweat,
The dust, the leather,—to forget! forget!—
The grass smells sweet; and happy, dusty, gray,
I've conquered dreams; the clangor dies away.
I breathe my horse, beside a field of rye,
Look up . . . and see an eagle sweeping by!
(*He falls into a chair; a moment rests his arms on the table, his head in his hands; then, in a deeper voice*):
If I could trust myself, have faith, be sure!
(*He raises an agonized face to* PROKESCH)
You, friend, who know me well,—I can endure
The truth, Prokesch,—what do you think of me?
Ah! if I am what others say we be
So often, great men's sons! It is his plan,
—His duty also as an Austrian
Metternich sows these doubts,—and makes them grow.
I tremble as he flings them lightly. So, . . .
—You know me well,—Speak not to soothe my pain!
Can I be emperor? Am I fit to reign?
(*With despair*) From my pale brow let every crown depart
If that its pallor be not Bonaparte!

PROKESCH (*moved*): Prince!

THE DUKE: Answer me! Should I heed this self disdain;
What am I? Tell me. All unfit to reign,—
The brow too heavy, and the hand too light?—
What do you think of me?

PROKESCH: Prince, in God's sight,
I think if all kings felt the woes you feel
They would rule only for the people's weal.

THE DUKE (*with a cry of joy embracing him*):
Thank you, Prokesch! That word is comforting.
To work, my friend.

SCENE V

The DUKE, PROKESCH; *later,* THERESE

(*A lackey enters, puts on the table a tray with letters and goes out. It is the one whom the* DUKE *has a little while ago declared listened at his door all night; the one the usher calls the Piedmontese.*)

PROKESCH: The post. I see they bring
Plenty of letters!
THE DUKE: Yes . . . from women. Those
I have unhampered.
PROKESCH: Heart-breaker!
THE DUKE: I suppose
There's a romantic halo 'round my fate.
(*He takes a letter which* PROKESCH *hands him, the seal broken*)
"I saw you, in your box. So pale of late."
It's thrown away. (*He tears it up, and takes another*)
"Oh, that pale brow" . . . It's thrown away.
(PROKESCH *hands him a third*) "I saw you riding in the Park to-day."
Torn up.
PROKESCH: Always?
THE DUKE (*taking still another*): "Your gentleness,
Your inexperience," . . . That's the canoness.
It's thrown away. (*The door opens softly and* THERESE *appears.*)
THERESE (*shyly*): Pardon.
THE DUKE (*turning*): You, little Spring?
THERESE: Why do you always say that curious thing?
THE DUKE: It's sweet. It's pure. It suits you.
THERESE: Sir, we leave
To-day for Parma.
THE DUKE (*with a forced smile*): Ah, I know,—and grieve.
THERESE (*sadly*): Parma!
THE DUKE: The land of violets.

THERESE: Yes . . . Sir . . .
THE DUKE: If Mother does not know it, tell it her.
THERESE: Yes, Monseigneur. Good-bye.
(*She goes slowly toward the door.*)
THE DUKE: Ah, little Spring,
Flow on your course!
THERESE (*stopping*): But . . . why . . . ? why little Spring?
THE DUKE: Its waters often cause me to rejoice
Seen in your eyes, or rippling in your voice. Good-bye.
THERESE (*goes toward the door, but at the threshold pauses as still hoping for something*):
Good-bye. You have no more to say?
THE DUKE: No more. Good-bye.
THERESE: Good-bye, sir. (*She goes out.*)
THE DUKE: Thrown away.

SCENE VI

The DUKE; PROKESCH

PROKESCH: Oh, I see!
THE DUKE (*dreaming*):
She loves me . . . and I would . . . perchance.
(*Changing his tone*)
But we make history and not romance.
To work! Our course in tactics! For time flies.
PROKESCH (*unfolding a paper which he has brought and laying it on the table*): Let me submit a plan. You criticize.
THE DUKE (*clearing the big table of books and arms to arrange a field of battle*):
Wait! Bring me, first,—there in the corner, see?—
The great box full of wooden soldiery.
My demonstration can be better made
If all my soldier-chessmen are displayed.
PROKESCH (*bringing the box of soldiers*):
Prove, in this plan, if all the risk is reckoned.

THE DUKE (*putting his hand on the box, with a return of his melancholy mood*):
Behold the soldiers of Napoleon Second.
PROKESCH (*reproachfully*): Prince!
THE DUKE: The net about me has so close a mesh,
Even my soldiers,—Lift the lid, Prokesch,—
My wooden soldiers must be Austrian.
Give me one . . . here, our left wing . . .
(*He takes the soldier* PROKESCH *hands him without looking at it; glancing over the table for his place; locates it, then suddenly, seeing it*): Why!
PROKESCH: Our plan . . .
THE DUKE (*amazed, taking up the little soldier and looking at it*): A grenadier of the Guard!
(PROKESCH *hands him another*): A skirmisher!
(*As* PROKESCH *hands them out*):
A scout!—A cuirassier!—Staff officer!
—They have turned French! See the new colors shine
Good Frenchmen all these fighting men of pine!
(*He hurls himself on the box and takes them out himself with increasing astonishment.*)
Oh, French! French! French!
PROKESCH: What is this prodigy?
THE DUKE: They've been repainted and recarved for me!
PROKESCH: By whom?
THE DUKE: Oh . . . by a soldier!
PROKESCH: Why? Let's see.
THE DUKE: There are seven buttons on this blue coatee.
The collars are correct; the braid, the flaps;
The epaulettes; trefoil and forage caps;
Exact. The artist had no doubt in placing
The smallest piping, the obscurest facing.
White list! Three-cornered pocket, clearly molded!
O unknown friend! with hands devoutly folded!
I thank you! Unknown soldier, from my heart
I thank you, who have come to take my part;

Who found a way, here in this dreary pen,
To give me all these loyal fighting men!
O wooden ranks, who is this hero mild?
—Only a hero could be such a child!—
Who has equipped you till you proudly felt
You were correct in every strap and belt?
Who could evade my watchful warders' eyes?
What brush, so loving, so minutely wise,
Gave every fighting man his brave moustache?
Stamped cannon cross-wise on each sabretache?
Or, dipped in gold, did not forget to trace
Grenade and bugle in its proper place!
(*Exulting more and more*)
Take them all out! . . . The table can't be seen!
The voltigeurs with epaulettes of green!
The scouts! the fuglemen! Come out! Come out!
Soldiers like these can put the world to rout!
Shut in this box,—opened at last!—Oh see
The whole Grand Army marches out to me!
Here are the Mamelukes! And here advances
The crimson plastron of the Polish lances!
The purple breeches of the sappers here!
Here different leggins! Oh, at last, at last!
The soldiers of the Line! advancing fast,
White calves, and waving plumes, to the attack!
Here, conscript infantry, whose legs are black,
Rush on them not less gallantly to death,
Green pompons waving! Surely they have breath!
(*Sighing*) Like to a dreaming prisoner who sees
In a toy village tiny wooden trees
And makes thereof a forest, solemn, free,—
So this toy army make my Eupopee!
(*He withdraws a little from the table.*)
But it is true! Since I can't see the prop
Without which every little man would drop,
Ah, look, Prokesch! They are not toys at all.

'Tis only distance makes them look so small!
(*He comes back with a bound and begins feverishly placing them.*)
Align them! Let's have Wagram, and Eylau!
(*He snatches a sabre from the arms placed on the pier-table and places it across his battlefield.*)
This yatagan's the river here, you know,
The Danube!
(*He indicates imaginary points.*)
Essling! Aspern, by the chest!
(*To* PROKESCH) A bridge across the river must be pressed.
Hand me some cavalry. . . . Oh, just a few!
We need a rise! That "Memorial" will do.
Saint-Cyr! . . . Molitor, victor at Bellegarde!
Crossing the bridge . . .
(METTERNICH *has entered and, standing behind the* DUKE, *who in the heat of action is kneeling in front of the table, the better to place his soldiers, he watches his manoeuvres.*)

SCENE VII

The Same. METTERNICH; *later, a* LACKEY

METTERNICH (*tranquilly*): Crossing the bridge?
THE DUKE (*shudders and turns*): The Guard!
METTERNICH (*looking through his eyeglass*):
I see the army has turned French to-day.
Where are the Austrians?
THE DUKE: They ran away.
METTERNICH: Tut! Tut!
(*He takes a little soldier and hands it back.*)
Who daubed them up?
THE DUKE: No one.
METTERNICH: Then you?
You spoil the toys we give you? Is that true?
THE DUKE (*turning pale*): Sir!
(METTERNICH *rings. A lackey appears. The Piedmontese.*)

METTERNICH: Take these soldiers! Throw them all away.
We'll get some new ones.
THE DUKE: You shall not, I say!
If I have toys, they shall be epic toys!
METTERNICH: What fly . . . or bee . . . sting causes all this noise?
THE DUKE (*marching to him, fists clenched*):
Know, sir, I have no taste for irony.
THE LACKEY (*who is carrying away the soldiers, as he passes behind the* DUKE):
'Sh, sir! I'll fix them. Leave it all to me!
METTERNICH: What is it?
THE DUKE (*suddenly calm, with forced meekness*):
Nothing. A moment of ill-will.
I beg your pardon. (*Aside*)
A friend! I can be still!
METTERNICH: I've brought your friend.
THE DUKE: My friend? Can I suppose . . .
METTERNICH: Marshal Marmont.
PROKESCH (*with hardly controlled indignation*): Marmont!
METTERNICH (*looking at* PROKESCH): He is one of those
I am pleased to see here.
PROKESCH (*between his teeth*): I can trust that story!
METTERNICH: He is here.
THE DUKE (*politely*): Let him come in.
(METTERNICH *goes out. Hardly has the door closed when the* DUKE *falls into a chair, and rests his head on the table in an attitude of despair.*)
O Father! . . . Dreams of glory!
Eagles! His mantle! And his throne! . . . away!
(*The door opens. He rises, immediately calm and smiling, and says very naturally to* MARMONT, *who enters with* METTERNICH):
Marshall Marmont, how do you do to-day?
METTERNICH (*wanting to get* PROKESCH *out of the way*):
Prokesch, perhaps you'd like to see the room.

The Duke has here . . .

(*He takes his arm and leads him away. The* DUKE *and* MARMONT *are alone.*)

SCENE VIII

The DUKE, MARMONT; *for one moment* METTERNICH *and* PROKESCH

MARMONT: Highness, I need not come
Again,—indeed, I've taught you all I know.
THE DUKE: How very sad. You interest me so.
MARMONT: The portrait I have showed your Grace was truth.
Faithful . . .
THE DUKE: Faithful? That's all, then?
MARMONT: All.
THE DUKE: But in his youth . . .
Not one more memory?
MARMONT: Not one.
THE DUKE: Then, let's review:
He was very great.
MARMONT: Very.
THE DUKE: But, lacking you,
He might have gone . . .
MARMONT: He might . . .
THE DUKE: Have gone too far?
MARMONT (*encouraged*): He had this weakness. He would trust . . .
THE DUKE: His star.
MARMONT (*satisfied*): I see we quite agree in our conclusions.
THE DUKE: And so he was . . . let's have no weak delusions . . .
MARMONT (*committing himself irrevocably*):
A great commander, surely. There are found
Others, perhaps, whom one might call . . .
THE DUKE: You hound!
MARMONT (*springing up*): Hein?
THE DUKE: Since from a memory, strangely weak and dim,

You've brought to-day the last you know of him,—
All that, in spite of you, was great and splendid,—
I toss you quite away,—you're empty! ended!

MARMONT (*aghast*): But I . . .

THE DUKE: Duke of Raguse, you to betray him! You!
Yes, you said, "Why not I?" The others, too,
Seeing their comrade mounting to a throne.
But you! He loved you! Always he had known
And loved you! From the ranks! Despite his fears,
Made you field marshal,—yes, at thirty years!

MARMONT (*correcting, drily*): Thirty-five.

THE DUKE: Ah, traitor of Essonnes! To say, dissemble,
Lie, cheat, betray, the people—Aye, you tremble!
The people have this verb; they say *"Raguse!"*
(*He rises and marches up to him.*)
What! Will you leave your silence to accuse!
'Tis not Prince François-Charle, imprisoned, weak,
—Napoleon Second bids you stand and speak!

MARMONT (*who has recoiled, terror-stricken*):
Somebody's coming. . . . Metternich, I say.

THE DUKE (*proudly, showing him the door that opens as he speaks*): Well, for the second time, you can betray.
(*With folded arms, he defies him. Silence.* METTERNICH *reappears with* PROKESCH.)

METTERNICH (*crossing the threshold, with* PROKESCH):
Don't let us interrupt your pleasant talk.
Prokesch and I are going for a walk,—
I want to show the Roman ruin where
I plan the ball. Perhaps it's only fair
I . . . last exponent of my school, they say,
Should plan a dance on ruins. So, good day.
(*He goes out. A pause.*)

MARMONT: I have kept silence, Highness.

THE DUKE: Why refuse
A chance so perfect once more to Raguse?

MARMONT (*sitting down*): I will sit still. Oh conjugate the verb.

THE DUKE: What do you mean?
MARMONT: Highness, you were superb.
THE DUKE: Sir!
MARMONT: I have belied the Emperor! Fifteen years
—Clamoring still to deafen my own ears.
O can you understand?—I would excuse
My treachery to me, Duke of Raguse.
I never saw him,—this one truth you lack,—
If I had seen him, he'd have won me back!
Others betrayed him, thinking to serve France;
But they all saw him. I, denied the chance,
Am captured now, as they were captured then!
THE DUKE: What do you mean?
MARMONT (*with rough fervor*): I've seen my Chief again!
THE DUKE (*from whose lips almost a cry of joy escapes*):
How? Where?
MARMONT: That brow! That gesture that would flay!
That flashing eye! Insult me! I will stay.
THE DUKE: You would have made amends in part, by me,
If by those words you help to make me free;
—Free from the doubts they ceaselessly suggest.
What! With this heavy brow, this narrow chest? . . .
MARMONT: I have seen him!
THE DUKE: Oh, you drive despair away!
I wish to pardon. Why did you betray . . . ?
MARMONT: Ah, Monseigneur!
THE DUKE: Why?
MARMONT (*with a discouraged gesture*): Utter weariness!
(*A moment before, the door at the back, right, has noiselessly opened a little, and nobody sees that the* LACKEY *who carried away the little soldiers is listening. At the word "weariness" he enters and softly closes the door behind him, while* MARMONT *continues, speaking freely now.*)
Europe was leagued against us. One success
Meant just . . . more fighting. We don't live forever.

Always Berlin . . . Vienna, . . . Paris never!
Always beginning, always! Always winning,
Once, twice, three times! It meant a new beginning!
The saddle always,—leather pressed to knee.
Oh, we were tired,—worn out! . . .

THE LACKEY (*in a voice of thunder*): Then what were we?

SCENE IX

The DUKE, MARMONT, FLAMBEAU

THE DUKE *and* MARMONT (*turning, and seeing him, standing in the background, his arms crossed on his breast*): Hein?

THE LACKEY (*coming by degrees nearer* MARMONT):

Then what were we, we privates, marching, bloody,
Footsore and dirty, hungry, sick and muddy,
Having no hope of duchies or donation,
Marching forever, never changing stations;
The unranked beggar at whose door none knocks
With batons from the Corporal's cartridge box;
We that keep marching, marching, day and night;
Staggering, not trembling; sweating,—not from fright;
Trusting our trumpeter to keep us strong,—
Him, and our fever, and a marching song!
We who for seventeen years had, every one,
Sabre and knapsack, tinder, pack and gun,
—Leather and horseback! What about the ground?—
A marching total close to sixty pounds.
Sweating in bearskins under tropic suns,—
Well, in the snow, they gave us thinner ones;
From Spain to Austria at the double quick,
—Pull up your legs like carrots if they stick;
In mud to drown a fellow where he stands,—
Well, pull your legs up,—have you got two hands?
We haven't any cough drops. If you shiver
An all day footbath's wholesome,—in the river.
When some fine officer would gallop up,—

"The enemy. Repulse them." Time to sup;—
Try this raw crow and if you find it good
Finish with sherbet,—snow and horse's blood.
What about us?

THE DUKE (*his hands clenching the arms of his chair, leaning forward, his eyes glowing*): At last!

THE LACKEY: Not dreading balls,
Afraid we'd wake up crazy,—cannibals!
What about us?

THE DUKE (*more and more bent forward, across the table, devouring this man with his gaze*): At last!

THE LACKEY: Fighting and fasting; always fight and fast!
Marching . . .

THE DUKE (*transfigured with joy*):
At last! I'm seeing one, at last!

THE LACKEY: Marching to fight, and fighting one to four;
Fighting, for room to march, and fight some more;
Marching and fighting; dirty, naked, mired,
Wounded, and gay,—I reckon we weren't . . . tired?

MARMONT (*aghast*): But . . .

THE LACKEY: We didn't owe him, we, a tallow dip,—
But we stood by,—and you gave him the slip!
Yes, you, whose horse pranced at the Emperor's gate . . .
(*To the* DUKE)
Highness, it is the honest soldier's fate
To feed his soul; on glory he can dine.
(*Indicating* MARMONT)
His epaulettes ain't worth these stripes of mine!

MARMONT: Who is this lackey "grumbler"? We must know.

THE LACKEY (*taking the military position*):
Flambard,—Jean-Pierre Seraphin Flambeau,—
Light infantry, ex-sergeant of the Guard;
A Breton father; mother, a Picarde;
Enlisted at fourteen; year, Six, month, Germinal;
Baptism at Marengo. Corporal,
The Fifteenth Fructidor, year Twelve. Was given

My sergeant staff,—and thought myself in heaven,—
In eighteen nine, July, right here. You see
The Guard held Schoenbrunn then and Sans-Souci.—
Serving His Most French Majesty; I've been
How many years? Sixteen. Campaigns? Sixteen.
Battles? Austerlitz, Somo-Sierra, and Eylau;
Eckmühl, Essling, Wagram, Smolensk,—O, I don't know,
Thirty-two skirmishes. Wounds? More than one.
For glory, rations,—mainly for the fun.

MARMONT (*to the* DUKE):
You will not listen so, Prince, to the end?

THE DUKE: You are right. Not so, but standing!
(*He rises.*) Go on, friend.

MARMONT: Monseigneur . . .

THE DUKE (*to* MARMONT): In the chapters of that book,
You make the chapter headings. All men look,
See the great letters, and forget indeed
The thousand little letters that they read;—
Yet you were nothing, vanished all your glory
Without the little ones that make the story.
(*To* FLAMBEAU)
My brave Flambeau, painter of wooden men,
I wish, I wish I could have guessed it when
You seem'd a spy that watched beside my door!

FLAMBEAU (*smiling*): We met each other very long before.

THE DUKE: We?

FLAMBEAU (*bringing his good broad face nearer*):
You don't remember?

THE DUKE: No. I wish I knew . . .

FLAMBEAU (*insisting*):
What, not that Thursday morning, at Saint Cloud?
Duroc, a maid, wet nurse. As I'm a sinner
Your Highness had an appetite for dinner.
Such a white breast, it gave me quite a shock.
'Twas in the park, of course. Then said Duroc
"Come here." I came; you may believe.

I saw the Royal Child; the maid's pink sleeve,—
The maid-in-waiting, marshal, and that nurse;
It set my plume to nodding like a hearse.
It caught your Highness' eyes. You seemed to say:
"What thing is that that's shaking thataway?"
You gave a little chuckling milky laugh.
'Twas half the colour pleased you, sir, and half
The way the thing kept shaking on my head;
—A rattle's nice; and so is something red.
I made a bow; your highness made a dab;
Your little hands were full with every grab.
Marshal Duroc said sternly, "You keep still.
His Majesty desires . . . " You had your will.
I heard, where I was kneeling meekly, I,
Nurse, maid and marshal laughing fit to die.
And when you let me go the ground was red
And for my plume, a wire stuck on my head.
"Sergeant, here's two for one," declared Duroc.
I went to quarters strutting like a cock.
"He! Pstt! You there! What bird snatched off your comb?"
I answered, "Adjutant, the King of Rome."
So that is when I met your Majesty.
You've grown, your Highness.

THE DUKE: Sergeant, no. You see
I have not grown, but lessened, Woe is me!
Your Highness, now; and then your Majesty.

MARMONT (*crossly, to* FLAMBEAU):
And since the Empire, tell us plainly which . . .

FLAMBEAU (*measuring him scornfully*):
I try to be as decent as a . . . b . . .
(*He bites his lips, just in time, remembering the presence of the* DUKE.)
I knew Solignac and Fournier-Sarlovèze;
Conspired with Didier, in those evil days;
The plot missed fire. Saw little Miard die,
He was fifteen,—and poor old David. I . . .

I shed some tears. I was condemned to death
For plotting. 'Twas a silly waste of breath!
Took a new name and came to town once more.
And fell to plotting as I did before.
I caught a royal guard one on the head,
—For stepping on my toes, I think I said,—
I mixed a punch or two; I took some rope,
But lived on sixty sous and on the hope
The Other might come riding into Var.
I promenaded, in a bolivar.
I quarreled if a man just looked at me,
Fought thirty duels. Next conspired . . . let's see . . .
At Bezier. Missed fire; condemned to die:
Missing. Why good. I let no chance go by.
Plotted at Lyons. Everybody caught.
I was condemned to death. Some good-for-naught
Let me escape. Paris! There, like as not,
I was arrested for another plot.
Desnouettes (Lefevre) was in America.
I joined him. "Help me home." Why, right you are.
Embarked; were shipwrecked; and my General,
—Shipped as plain passenger,—was drowned. That's all.
But I can swim. I swam and cried and swam;—
Sunshine, blue waves, and gulls. Caught like a clam,—
Rescued and put ashore, just on the dot
To have some fun in the great Saumur plot.
Missed fire. Court martial. Sentenced. Got away.
The Commandant Caron, I heard them say,
Was plotting at Toulon. Got there. In vain
Babbling in wine shops. Plot missed fire again.
Wholesale arrests. Condemned to death for plotting.
I went to war in Greece; there's no use rotting
Or rusting out while Turks are left to tackle.
Came back to France one morning; helped them hackle
A bit of pavement—that was mid-July,—
A good day's fighting; for that night saw fly

The old tricolor, something like a flag,
And not the Emigrant's pale sickly rag.
—I think the staff lacks something till there swings
Atop . . . something . . . in gold . . . that flaps its wings!
Left, for a Romagne plot. . . . It missed fire. Since
Your cousin . . .

THE DUKE (*eagerly*): Her name?

FLAMBEAU: It's Camerata, Prince . . .
Hired me to learn her fencing.

THE DUKE (*understanding everything*): Ah! . . .

FLAMBEAU: In Tuscany.
We plotted while we fenced, sir, her and me.
We heard about a dangerous bit to do,—
I got forged papers,—and I'm watching you!
(*He winks and rubs his hands together.*)
I spy,—but see the Countess every day.
I've found the hole, sir, where you used to play
With Master Colin, little Robinson.
That passage has two openings, sir, and one,
—The one on which a body always settles,—
That is an ant-heap; t'other, bed of nettles.
I hide; your Cousin with an album brings
Her folding stool, to sketch them Roman things;
—She plays the English tourist to a t.,—
And every day we plot there, her and me,—
Me whispering like a prompter from the wings,—
To make you Emperor in spite of kings.

THE DUKE (*deeply moved, after a moment*):
For such devotion, in such danger here,—
What guerdon can I give you?

FLAMBEAU: Pull my ear.

THE DUKE: Pull? . . .

FLAMBEAU (*gaily*): What an ex-Grumbler always wants.

THE DUKE (*a little shocked by this soldierly familiarity*):
An ex . . . ?

FLAMBEAU: I'm waiting. . . . Come, then. Yes, now thumb . . . index.

(*The* DUKE *pinches his ear gingerly, and in spite of himself a little haughtily.*)

FLAMBEAU (*sticking out his lip*):

That's not the way, sir; never made me wince.
You haven't got the hang, . . . you're too much prince!

THE DUKE (*trembling*): Ah! You believe so!

MARMONT: Fool, to tell the lad!

FLAMBEAU: When it's a French prince, that is not so bad.

THE DUKE (*anxiously*):

You find me French, although in Austria placed?

FLAMBEAU: Oh yes. (*He looks around him.*) You don't fit here . . .
Rich! Sick'ning taste!

MARMONT: *You* see?

FLAMBEAU: I've an upholsterer brother . . . and it's plain.
He works in Paris, . . . Percier and Fontaine.
That's imitation . . . but you've got, by thunder!
One Louis-Fifteenth that is just a wonder!
I'm not a judge, but I can see what's good.
(*He picks up an armchair as if it were a feather, and examining the heavy gilded wood in German taste.*)
Pretty insipid, all this worthless wood.
(*He puts it down, showing the tapistry that covers it.*)
But the upholstery . . . hein? there's taste . . . there's mystery;
It sings . . . it smiles, . . . it brings a bit of history!
Why? You know why? That came from Gobelin's looms.
You can't miss them in any sort of rooms.
They bear their mark,—that taste . . . that elegance . . .
—You also, Highness, you were made in France.

MARMONT (*to the* DUKE): You must go back.

FLAMBEAU: And on the Cross of Honour
We'll stamp the Emperor we've missed upon her.

THE DUKE: Who took his place there?

FLAMBEAU: Henry Fourth. All right,—

They had at least to choose one that could fight.
I think the Emperor smiles, upon the whole.
King Henry for a falseface, bless my soul!
—You've seen the Cross?

THE DUKE (*sadly*): In a Museum chest.

FLAMBEAU: Monseigneur, you must see her on a breast.
Under a bomb-torn flag, a drop of blood,
Turns, as it falls,—part of an ardent flood,—
To gold, enamel, emerald, and is found
A jewel, flowing from a soldier's wound.

THE DUKE: My friend, I well believe that it must shine
Fair on your breast.

FLAMBEAU: Who? Me? 'Twas never mine.

THE DUKE (*surprised*):
—A record brave and great and free from dross . . .

FLAMBEAU: It's something special, sir, that wins the Cross.

THE DUKE: You didn't claim . . .

FLAMBEAU (*earnestly*): What Tondu didn't give
You hadn't earned. That's certain as you live.

THE DUKE: Ah, well! I, lacking title, kingdom, power,
I,—memory of a dream of one great hour,—
This Duke of Reichstadt who has made his mark
Strolling 'neath lindens in an Austrian park,
And carving Ns upon their mossy boles,—
—Stifling the cough that brings spies from their holes,—
I, who not even the smallest bit can find
Of crimson silk, which once my cradle lines,
Whose star they vainly sought beneath the sun,
(*He shows the two medallions on his breast.*)
Bearing two crosses, lacking still the One,—
Imprisoned, exiled, sick, . . . I am afraid
It won't seem like a gift at dress parade. . . .
A hero scattering stars. . . .
Perhaps you'd rather
It were not done at all . . . and yet . . . my father
Through whose hands all a firmament has passed

Has surely left his son this much at last,—
Some star dust from his Star . . . and so . . . and so
I decorate you, Jean-Pierre Seraphin Flambeau.

FLAMBEAU: You!

THE DUKE: God! This riband's not a real one.

FLAMBEAU: Sir, when it's real,
It makes men weep. And that's the way I feel.

MARMONT: Let Paris legalize it.

THE DUKE: For that trip
What can I do?

FLAMBEAU: Why, Highness, pack your grip.

THE DUKE: Alas!

FLAMBEAU (*rapidly*): No more alases! It's the ninth to-day,
You'll reach the Pont-Neuf on the thirtieth, say;
Help,—and the thirtieth you'll see the Seine,—
At this here ball of old Nepomucene.

THE DUKE *and* MARMONT: Of whom?

FLAMBEAU: Metternich. (Clemert-Lothaire-Wencelas-
Nepomucene.) Go to his ball. . . . Good-bye alas!

MARMONT: I'm hearing dangerous secrets at this minute.

FLAMBEAU (*gaily, enrolling him with a gesture*):
You won't betray a plot if you are in it.

THE DUKE (*shrugging his shoulders*):
No! Not Marmont!

MARMONT: Yes. I'll go in. (*To* FLAMBEAU.)
Eh, Sergeant, neatly taken.
A siren song had left me all unshaken,—
But you have captured me in open fight.

FLAMBEAU: I had a pretty opening all right.

MARMONT: Very imprudent!

FLAMBEAU: My besetting sin,—
I throw an extra spice of hazard in.
An extra frill or two is my delight,—
A rose stuck in my ear, I go to fight,
Danger gilt-edged!

MARMONT: Well, then, if Camerata
Will use me . . .

THE DUKE (*vehemently*): No, not Marmont!
FLAMBEAU: Tara tata!
Let him redeem himself.
THE DUKE: No!
MARMONT (*to* FLAMBEAU): I have lists,
—Carefully made,—disgruntled royalists.
Ambassador Maison, as one surmises . . .
FLAMBEAU: We can use him.
THE DUKE (*dolorously*): Already compromises!
(*Desperately*)
I won't have Marmont swear,—I tell you both!
MARMONT (*saluant*): I will obey you,—when I take the oath.
—Marshal Maison is near; the time seems right.
(*He goes out.*)
FLAMBEAU (*closing the door and coming down*):
The dirty skunk is quite entirely right.

SCENE X

The DUKE, FLAMBEAU

THE DUKE (*much agitated, walking back and forth*):
So be it! I will go! . . . But tell me, then,
Does France desire her Emperor again?
Does widowed France still mourn Napoleon?
Do those kind hearts recall his only son?
FLAMBEAU (*poetically*):
Her tenderness to you she always renders.
(*And from his pocket he draws out something long, tricoloured, and waves it splendidly around his head, then hands it to the* DUKE.)
THE DUKE: Why, what is this, Flambeau?
FLAMBEAU (*serenely*): Why, them's suspenders.
THE DUKE: Have you gone mad?
FLAMBEAU: Look what's on them braces.
THE DUKE: My portrait! . . .
FLAMBEAU: Yes, you keep them in their places.
THE DUKE: Flambeau . . .

FLAMBEAU (*handing him a snuffbox, which he takes out of his shirt*): Pray have a pinch. "Flambeau," you said . . .

THE DUKE: I . . .

FLAMBEAU: Look, on the box. Ain't that a curly head?

THE DUKE: It's I!

FLAMBEAU (*taking out a huge handkerchief such as peddlers carry*): A clear blue sky, sir, for our going home.
Looks like fair weather for the King of Rome?
(*He hangs the handkerchief over the back of a chair.*)

THE DUKE: But . . .

FLAMBEAU (*unfolding a colored print*):
A picture for your walls. It suits their fancies.

THE DUKE: It's I . . . upon a horse . . .

FLAMBEAU: A horse that prances.
—How do you like this pipe? (*He gives him a pipe.*)

THE DUKE (*recognizing himself carved on the bowl*):
Flambeau! Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU: You didn't know you looked like that, I know.

THE DUKE (*divided between deep feeling and laughter*): I . . .

FLAMBEAU (*taking from his pocket all manner of little things*):
Cockade!—It's worn in hopes of starting trouble.

THE DUKE: What else?

FLAMBEAU: A locket; there they see you double.

THE DUKE: Still me!

FLAMBEAU: Still you. And on this glass . . . see that . . .
They've cut the words . . .
(*He has taken a glass from the tails of his lackey's coat.*)

THE DUKE (*reading*): François, Duke of Reichstadt.

FLAMBEAU (*taking a painted plate from under his waistcoat*):
Can't eat without a plate; that's not the thing.

THE DUKE (*more and more astonished*): A plate?

FLAMBEAU (*setting the table as he draws his treasures out*):
A knife, of course,—a napkin ring,—
An egg-cup, too. Now, don't you get unnerved!
(*He draws up a chair.*)
The cover's laid;—and Monseigneur is served.

THE DUKE (*sinking into the chair*): Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU (*with growing enthusiasm*): And that ain't all.
You've seen these neck-scarves, maybe,—
With you embroidered, when you was a baby?
And playing cards where all the trumps are you?

THE DUKE (*dizzy, as the objects rain round him on the table*):
Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU: And almanachs.

THE DUKE: Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU: All you! All you!

THE DUKE (*suddenly sobbing*): Flambeau!

FLAMBEAU: You're crying? Lord! It kind o' strikes me dumb!
(*He snatches the bandanna which he had spread on the back of a chair.*)
Here, wipe your eyes, sir, on the King of Rome! . . .
(*Kneeling near the* DUKE, *and drying his tears with the handkerchief.*)
I tell you, Prince, strike while the iron's hot;
People, and marshals, you have got the lot.
The king,—the king, I tell you!—can exist,
Only as Bonapartist. But he missed . . .
It's useless for a cock to take the pains
Of playing eagle. Rooster he remains.
Air lacking glory Frenchmen find too dead;
The French crown can't stay on a pudd'n head;
And all young France will rally to you, singing,
A song of Beranger, their Emperor bringing,
The pavements throb to greet Napoleon.
Versaille will suit you better than Schoenbrunn!

THE DUKE (*rising*): I accept . . . I'll fly . . .
(*Military music without. The* DUKE *trembles.*)

FLAMBEAU (*who runs to the window*): On the imperial stair
The music of the guard. The Emperor's there,—
Returning to Schoenbrunn.

THE DUKE (*shuddering*): Grandfather! . . . And my word!

My promise! (*To* FLAMBEAU.)
No, before accepting . . .

FLAMBEAU (*uneasily*): . . Oh, good Lord!

THE DUKE: . . . First, I must try him. . . . But to-night, Flambeau,
When you come back to guard me, you will know,
If you see something you . . . don't always see,
That I accept,—will go.

FLAMBEAU (*like a gamin*): Oh, hully gee!
What is the signal?

THE DUKE: You'll see.

FLAMBEAU: When I first come in?

(*The door opens.* FLAMBEAU *hastily withdraws from the* DUKE *and seems to be setting things in order. On the threshold appears a member of the Hungarian Noble Guard; red and silver uniform; yellow boots; panther skin over the shoulder; fur cap; with a long white plume with silver mounting.*

SCENE XI

The Same. The OFFICER *of the Noble Guard*

THE OFFICER: Monseigneur . . .

FLAMBEAU (*aside, looking at him*):
The dog has surely got a handsome skin.

THE DUKE: What, sir?

THE OFFICER: The Emperor has returned. They told him here,
"Sire, on this day you have promised to appear
To all your subjects. Many come from far.
Are they to be received?" "Of course they are,"
The Emperor, always simple, said, "for here,
I am grandfather, more than emperor. So
It pleases me, this doubly happy chance,
To meet my children and my grandson, Franz."
May they come up?

THE DUKE: Throw open every door.

(*The officer goes out. To the end of the act one hears the military band in the park, without.*)

SCENE XII

The DUKE, FLAMBEAU

THE DUKE (*hurriedly, when he sees that they are alone, indicating the objects on the table*):

Tie them all up, just as they were before.
I want to see them more . . . but quick . . . be brief!

FLAMBEAU (*quickly gathering them up in the blue bandanna*):

A peddler's pack here in this handkerchief?
But what's the signal, Prince, and where'll you show it?

THE DUKE: Flambeau, I say you cannot fail to know it!
—The Austrian hymn! The royal band that plays!

FLAMBEAU (*knotting the corners of the handkerchief*):

I'd trade the lay out for one *Marseillaise.*

THE DUKE: The *Marseillaise!* Tie it . . . quick! . . . You are rash! . . .
My father said "That air has a moustache."

FLAMBEAU (*tightening the knots*):

Their air has whiskers, so it's called a hymn.

THE DUKE (*running a riding crop through the knotted bandanna and putting it over his shoulder*):

I could return to France in just this trim,
My knapsack on my back, joy in my soul.

(*He goes toward his room with a merry swagger, like a recruit, the blue bandanna on the stick over his shoulders.*)

FLAMBEAU (*following him with his eyes, suddenly moved*):

Prince, you are mighty sweet and mighty droll!
—This is the first time I have seen you so.

THE DUKE (*about to enter his room, turns*):

A little young . . . and gay . . . ? That's true.
(*With deep feeling.*) Thank you, Flambeau.

(*Curtain*)

ACT III

Spreading Wings

The same setting. The window still open on the park. But the colours of the park have changed with the declining sun. There are now gorgeous sunset tints. The Gloriette is golden.

The table, with its books, has been pushed against the wall, Right, to leave a wide space free. Not a throne, but a huge arm-chair has been brought that the old Emperor *may be at once majestic and paternal. When the curtain rises, the people to whom the* Emperor *will give audience have taken their places. Each one has in his hand a little slip of paper on which his request has been written. They wait, standing, talking in whispers. Citizens in their Sunday best; soldiers' widows in mourning; peasants from every corner of the Empire; Bohemians, Tyroleans, etc., a medley of national costumes.*

Archers, rather like beadles (red-laced coats with facings and belts of black velvet; white knee breeches; high boots; cocked hats half covered by a cascade of feathers) stand motionless by the doors, Right. An officer of the Hungarian Guard comes and goes, staging the grouping of the throng. He assembles the throng, toward the back, in front of the window and, Left, against the closed doors of the Duke's *chamber.*

SCENE I

An Officer *of the Guard;* Archers; Peasants; Citizens; Women; Children; *later, The* Emperor Franz

The Officer: Stand back. . . . You, old man! . . . Baby, hush I say! . . .

(*He indicates the second door, Right.*)

The Emperor enters there! You block the way!
—You mountaineer, quit shuffling with your feet!

A MAN (*timidly*): He'll pass . . . ?

THE OFFICER: And take the papers. I repeat
Keep them in sight; let none of them be hidden.
(*All the little papers, held out, are fluttering.*)
Don't try to tell your troubles.
(*Everyone is in line; the officer takes his place near the table, then, recalling one more order*):
It's forbidden
To kneel, upon his entrance.

A WOMAN (*aside*): If he tries,
He can't prevent it!
(*The door opens; the* EMPEROR *appears; everybody kneels.*)

EMPEROR FRANZ (*very simply*): Rise, my children, rise.
(*He comes down. The little papers flutter more and more. He has the long, melancholy face familiar in his portraits; but a great air of benevolence. He is wearing, with intentional simplicity, the citizens' dress which he affects; gray frock coat, buff waistcoat, gray trousers, tucked into top boots. He takes the petition handed him by a woman. Reads it, and hands it to the* CHAMBERLAIN, *who follows him, saying*):
The pension doubled.

THE WOMAN (*kneeling*): Sire!

THE EMPEROR (*having read the petition handed him by a countryman*): Ah, ha! That's rather
Dear, my man! Two beeves! (*He hands it to the* CHAMBERLAIN.) Well, . . . granted!

THE PEASANT (*effusively*): Father!

THE EMPEROR (*handing the* CHAMBERLAIN *a countrywoman's petition*): Accorded!

THE WOMAN (*blessing him*): Father Franz!

THE EMPEROR (*stopping before a poor man whom he recognizes*):
What! You again?
Things going well?

THE MAN (*turning his cap in his hands*): Not badly.

THE EMPEROR (*hands the petition to the* CHAMBERLAIN *and stops before an old woman*): Come; what then?

THE OLD WOMAN (*while the* EMPEROR *reads her petition*):
You see . . . the wind storms made the pullets die.

THE EMPEROR (*reading her bit of paper*): So be it, goody.
(*He hands her petition to the* CHAMBERLAIN; *he takes another handed him by a Tyrolean, and, having read it*):
A singer?

THE TYROLEAN: I yodel, I.

THE EMPEROR (*smiling*): Sing before us at Baden soon.

THE CHAMBERLAIN (*making a note of the petitioner*):
The name?

THE TYROLEAN (*eagerly*): Schnauser.

THE EMPEROR (*stopping before a huge fellow with bare knees*):
A mountaineer?

THE MOUNTAINEER: From yonder hills I came.
Their blue line lifts and pulls the heavens down.
I want to drive a cab, sire, here in town.

THE EMPEROR (*shrugging his shoulders*): Done.
(*He hands the petition to the* CHAMBERLAIN *and takes from a substantial farmer the following petition, which he reads half to himself*):
Here a land-owner begs of Father Franz
His daughter's heart, stolen by evil chance,
By a glass-blower of Bohemia.

THE FARMER: Sire . . .

THE EMPEROR (*hands back the paper*):
Give the young people what their hearts desire.

THE FARMER (*disappointed*): But . . .

THE EMPEROR: I'll give the dowry.
(*The farmer's brow clears.*)

THE CHAMBERLAIN (*making a note*): Name?

THE FARMER (*eagerly*): Johannes Schmoll.
(*He bows before the* EMPEROR.) I kiss your hand.

LONG LIVE THE EMPEROR!

THE EMPEROR (*reading the paper which he has taken from a young shepherd, deeply bowed and enveloped in a great mantle*): *A shepherd of Tyrol,*
Orphaned, despoiled and driven from his home
By ancient enemies, desires to come
Back to its woods, its skies . . ." A touching plea.—
"And to his father's land." So let it be.
(*He hands the petition to the* CHAMBERLAIN.)

THE CHAMBERLAIN: The shepherd's name, whom we so much advance?

THE SHEPHERD (*standing erect*):
The Duke of Reichstadt, and his land is France!
(*He throws off his coat, disclosing his white uniform. A stir. A frightened hush.*)

THE EMPEROR (*in a stern voice*): Begone! Leave us!
(*The officers quickly clear the room. The doors are closed. Grandfather and grandson are left alone.*)

SCENE II

The EMPEROR, *The* DUKE

THE EMPEROR (*in a voice that trembles with rage*): What's this?

THE DUKE (*immobile, and still holding in his hand his little peasant's hat*): If I were nothing, Sire,
But a Tyrolean in his mean attire,
Herdsman or hunter with a green felt cap
And a cock's feather, you would see his hap;
Bend from your throne to heed his wretchedness.

THE EMPEROR: But, Franz! . . .

THE DUKE: I know that all your subjects,—yes,
All the unhappy always,—may declare
Themselves your sons like us. But is it fair
That I, bowed down beneath my wretchedness,
Am not your child like these, but so much less?

THE EMPEROR (*fretfully*):
But why not come in private? You deserve

A sharp rebuke. While I essayed to serve
All those poor souls! Why was this madness planned?
THE DUKE: I sought you where you let your heart expand.
THE EMPEROR (*still angrily, throwing himself into the arm-chair*): My heart! Do you know your audacity?
THE DUKE: I know that you can do this thing for me;
That I am wretched past what I can bear;
That you're Grandfather. All my case is there.
THE EMPEROR (*agitated*): There's Europe! There is England —and still nigher
There's Metternich!
THE DUKE: You're my grandfather, Sire.
THE EMPEROR: You do not know . . . you are too young to see . . .
THE DUKE: I am the grandson of your Majesty.
THE EMPEROR: But . . .
THE DUKE (*coming close to him*):
You have a little, Oh a little, Sir,
The right to be Grandfather?
THE EMPEROR: But . . .
THE DUKE: Defer
Being the Emperor till a better chance.
THE EMPEROR: You always were a shameless wheedler, Franz.
THE DUKE: I do not like your Emperor face at all,
Like the great portrait in the Imperial Hall;
Mantle and Golden Fleece,—too grand to touch;
But Oh, like this I love you very much,—
Your dear white hair, the silver locks that float,
The kind blue eyes, buff waistcoat, long frock coat;
Not Emperor so, but just Grandfather dear,
Spoiling his grandchild.
THE EMPEROR (*shaking his head*): Spoilt too much, I fear!
THE DUKE (*kneeling at the old* EMPEROR'S *feet*):
Is Louis Philippe so handsome you can't bear
French coins without his picture?
THE EMPEROR (*trying not to smile*): Tut, tut! There!
THE DUKE: Are stupid Bourbons, sir, your only joy?

THE EMPEROR (*stroking his curly head, thoughtfully*):
You are not like the other archdukes, boy!
THE DUKE: You find . . . ?
THE EMPEROR: Where did you get these pretty fooleries?
THE DUKE: A baby playing in the Tuileries!
THE EMPEROR (*shaking his finger at him*): Ah! you go back . . . ?
THE DUKE: I want to.
THE EMPEROR: Can it be
(*He fixes his eyes anxiously on the kneeling child.*)
You've kept it all this time in memory?
THE DUKE: Vaguely . . .
THE EMPEROR (*after a moment's hesitation*):
And of . . . your father?
THE DUKE: Just this far,—
A man who pressed me close . . . against a star, . . .
Held me so tight . . . I crying for my part,—
That diamond star was stamped upon my heart.
(*He rises, proudly.*)
Sire, it has stayed there.
THE EMPEROR (*holding out his hand*): Have I heart to blame?
THE DUKE (*ardently*): Ah, let the goodness of your heart proclaim!
When I was little, sir, we loved each other.
You wanted all our luncheons served together.
We dined, we two, alone.
THE EMPEROR (*dreaming*): You were a charmer.
THE DUKE: I had long curls and I was Prince of Parma.
(*He sits down on the arm of the* EMPEROR'S *chair.*)
When I was punished, Grandpa took my part.
THE EMPEROR (*smiling*): You always hated ponies . . . from the start . . .
Remember?
THE DUKE: Yes! . . . That white one . . . when a page
Led it up, saddled, how I stamped with rage!
THE EMPEROR (*laughing*): Ponies were babies' toys. Of course, of course!

THE DUKE: Raging, I screamed "I want a great big horse."
THE EMPEROR (*shaking his head*):
And now, "a great big horse" you want no less.
THE DUKE: And when I fought my German governess!
THE EMPEROR (*more and more carried on the tide of memories*):
And when, with Colin, you from sun to sun
Dug great holes in my park.
THE DUKE: As Robinson.
THE EMPEROR (*clearing his throat*): You, Robinson!
THE DUKE: My cave was rather narrow
For me, my guns and hatchet, bow and arrow.
THE EMPEROR (*more and more animated*):
And later, at my door you mounted . . .
THE DUKE: . . . Guard.
THE EMPEROR: The ladies of my household found it hard
To pass that watch. They'd come with this to tell:—
"Your pardon, Sire. I kissed the sentinel."
THE DUKE: You loved me.
THE EMPEROR (*putting his arm around him*): And I love you!
THE DUKE (*fairly in his grandfather's arms*): Prove this thing!
THE EMPEROR (*wholly melted*): My Franz, my grandson!
THE DUKE: Is it true the king,
If I appeared, would simply disappear?
THE EMPEROR: Hum . . .
THE DUKE: The truth!
THE EMPEROR: I . . .
THE DUKE (*putting his finger on his lips*): Tell the truth!
THE EMPEROR: Well . . . maybe, dear!
THE DUKE (*embracing him, with a cry of joy*): I love you!
THE EMPEROR (*conquered and forgetting everything else*):
If to Strasburg you should come,
Alone, upon the bridge, with not a drum,
You'd be made king!
THE DUKE (*his arms close about him*): I adore you!
THE EMPEROR: Child, you choke . . .
You're strangling me.

THE DUKE: I'm not!
THE EMPEROR (*laughing and coughing*): Too bad I spoke!
THE DUKE (*very seriously*):
Vienna winds don't suit my throat, you know.
My doctor orders Paris.
THE EMPEROR: Yes?
THE DUKE: Yes, it's sweet air, . . . and so,
Since Paris it must be, why, let's manoeuvre
To have my season open at . . . the Louvre.
THE EMPEROR: Ah, bah!
THE DUKE: Ah, if you would!
THE EMPEROR (*tempted*): It isn't new . . .
The thing's been broached.
THE DUKE (*earnestly*): Ah, do, Grandfather, do!
THE EMPEROR: My God, I wish . . .
THE DUKE: You can!
THE EMPEROR: But . . . if I ought.
THE DUKE: It's never best to trust a second thought.
Bid your heart speak; it led you well before.
And what a pretty tale: An Emperor
To spoil his grandson, changed the big world's map.
And, for an extra feather in your cap,
To say,—quite carelessly, as if by chance,—
"This is my grandson, Emperor of France!"
THE EMPEROR (*more and more fascinated*): Indeed . . .
THE DUKE: You'll say it! What we both desire!
THE EMPEROR: Ah, well, but . . .
THE DUKE (*pleading*): Sire!
THE EMPEROR (*yielding and opening his arms*): Yes, sire!
THE DUKE (*with a cry of joy*): Ah, sire!
THE EMPEROR: Sire!
THE DUKE: Sire!

(*They are in each other's arms, laughing and crying together. The door opens.* METTERNICH *appears. He is in full dress; green coat, with gold lace, knee breeches; white stockings; with his Order of the Golden Fleece.*

He is motionless for a moment, regarding, with a ministerial air, this family scene.)

THE EMPEROR (*seeing him, hastily, to the* DUKE): Metternich!
(*Grandfather and grandson separate like children caught in mischief.*)

SCENE III

The EMPEROR, *The* DUKE, METTERNICH

THE EMPEROR (*recovering himself a little, to the* DUKE):
Do not fear!
(*He rises, and, placing his hand on the head of the* DUKE, *who remains kneeling, he says to* METTERNICH, *in a voice which he tries to render firm*): I will . . .
THE DUKE (*aside*): All's lost!
THE EMPEROR: I will that this child reign.
METTERNICH (*bowing deeply*): Good. At all cost.
(*Turning to the* DUKE)
Prince, with your partisans I can the faster
Arrange the terms . . .
THE DUKE (*astonished*): I feared . . .
THE EMPEROR (*also a little astonished, but recovering himself, proudly*): What? I am master.
THE DUKE (*gaily, taking his grandfather's arm*):
Whom will you send me as ambassador?
METTERNICH (*coming down*): It's understood . . .
THE EMPEROR (*to the* DUKE, *tapping him on the cheek*):
You'll visit me, as emperor?
THE DUKE (*importantly*):
Yes,—when the House has risen,—for one sees . . .
METTERNICH: We only ask for certain guarantees.
THE DUKE (*beaming*): All that you want.
THE EMPEROR (*who has seated himself*): You are content?
(*The* DUKE *kisses his hand.*)
METTERNICH: We mustn't fail
To settle certain matters,—mere detail.

Dispersing certain groups we must require.
We don't like neighbors who will play with fire.
THE DUKE (*who hardly hears* METTERNICH): Grandfather dear!
METTERNICH: One hears . . . you must know why . . .
A bit too much of heroes of July.
THE DUKE (*suddenly attentive*): But . . .
METTERNICH (*coldly*): Bonapartism . . . Liberalism, . . . these . . .
Just clip the bond between them, if you please.
Exile Chateaubriand . . .
THE DUKE (*withdrawing a little from his grandfather*): What?
METTERNICH (*imperturbable*): And Lamenais.
Muzzle the press a little, that professes . . .
THE DUKE: That doesn't press.
THE EMPEROR: Indeed? Indeed it presses!
THE DUKE (*moving a little farther away*):
Nay, I crave pardon of your Majesty
That touches Liberty.
THE EMPEROR (*horrified*): Franz, liberty?
METTERNICH: We will be free to act, I understand,
Both in Bologna and on Polish land?
THE DUKE (*looking fixedly at him*): And then?
METTERNICH: And then? Why, certain trifling claims,
And then . . . the matter of the marshals' names . . .
From battles . . .
(*He bows, with an air of condolence, to the old* EMPEROR)
. . . lost, Sire, in your own dominion.
These must be done away.
THE DUKE (*imperiously*): In your opinion?
THE EMPEROR (*soothingly*): It might be . . .
METTERNICH (*harshly*): Pardon, Sire. These men are mad
To hold the titles we have always had.
Surely you see it is a grave mischance,—
This carrying Austrian towns, in names, to France.
THE DUKE (*dolorously*): Grandfather! Oh!
(*He has now quite withdrawn from him.*)

THE EMPEROR (*hanging his head*): Ah, now I see what harms . . .
THE DUKE (*woefully*): Grandfather, we were in each others' arms!
METTERNICH (*calmly*): Then the tricoloured flag must be suppressed.

(*Silence. The* DUKE *slowly moves forward till he is face to face with* METTERNICH.)

THE DUKE: You wish, sir, that this flag which freemen love,
Blood on its base and heaven's blue above,
—Since fecund horror at its base was hurled
And high it holds the hope of all the world,—
Your Excellency says I must efface
This heaven-blue top, this life-ensanguined base,
That, having linen washed of memory,
I make thereof a shroud for Liberty?
THE EMPEROR (*angrily*): What! Liberty again?
THE DUKE: Sir, I inherit,
From the paternal line, so much of merit.
METTERNICH (*chuckling scornfully*):
Eighteenth Brumaire is in his constitution.
THE DUKE: Aye, and my Granddam was the Revolution.
THE EMPEROR (*rising*): Unhappy boy!
METTERNICH (*triumphant*): A most Utopian thing . . .
Emperor! . . . Republican! The brasses ring
The Marseillaise; and in another key
The flutes breathe *"Save the Empire."*
THE DUKE: That may be.
An Emperor who did just those two things
Could play a tune to rout all lesser kings.
THE EMPEROR (*beside himself*):
This before me? You dare? Can this thing be?
THE DUKE: I understand now what you offer me.
THE EMPEROR: What has come over him? Whence comes this tone?
THE DUKE: You want an Archduke upon France's throne.

THE EMPEROR (*raising trembling hands to heaven*):
Whence this bravado? Whence these new beliefs?
THE DUKE: From certain egg-cups, pipes, and handkerchiefs.
THE EMPEROR: He's mad! His words are crazy! He is mad!
THE DUKE: Crazy to have the trust I lately had.
METTERNICH: The obstacles are yours. Your cause was won.
THE DUKE: If I will drive a gig and not a gun!
THE EMPEROR: We offer nothing now.
THE DUKE (*his arms crossed on his breast*): The cage?
THE EMPEROR: If that's my will.
THE DUKE: An Austrian cage, it holds the Eaglet, still.
THE EMPEROR: Indeed? The Hapsburg eagles never lack
Their eaglets. You're but one.
THE DUKE: O, eagle black,
Two-headed bird with cruel, weary sight,
O Austrian eagle, world-worn bird of night,
An Eagle of the day swept through your path,
And,—fluttering wildly in your fear and wrath,—
Not daring to believe, bird black and old,
You see one eaglet sprouting wings of gold!
THE EMPEROR: How I repent my weakness, lately proved.
(*He looks around.*)
These books,—these arms,—I'll have them all removed!
(*Calling*) Dietrichstein!
METTERNICH: Not in the palace, Sire.
(*The day wanes. The park is violet. Behind the Gloriette, the sky is red.*)
THE EMPEROR: We've been too mild.
I will suppress all that,—poor, nervous child,—
Makes you recall your father and your birth.
THE DUKE (*pointing to the park*):
Ah, well! Tear up those violets from the earth.
Drive out the bees that buzz about the park!
THE EMPEROR (*to* METTERNICH): Change all his servants!
METTERNICH: I'll send off Otto, Mark,
And Herman, Gotlieb, Albrecht.

THE DUKE (*pointing, through the window, to the evening star, which has risen*): Close the blind!
That star might call my father's to my mind!
THE EMPEROR: For Dietrichstein, I will at once prepare
A new strict order.
(*To* METTERNICH) Write.
METTERNICH (*sitting down by the table, looking about for writing materials*): The inkstand? Where? . . .
THE DUKE: Use mine, there on the console. I have said
You may.
METTERNICH (*looking all about*): Where, then? I do not see.
THE DUKE: Minerva's head
In bronze and marble.
METTERNICH (*looking everywhere*): I see nothing.
THE DUKE (*indicating the console on the right, on which there is nothing*): Hold,
Try, then, the other with its burnished gold,
On the pier-table.
METTERNICH (*frightened, passing his hand over the bare marble of the console*): Where?
THE EMPEROR (*looking anxiously at the* DUKE):
What inkstands?
THE DUKE (*motionless, looking fixedly*): Sire,
Those that my father left me.
THE EMPEROR (*trembling*): What do you desire? . . .
What mean, to say?
THE DUKE: Yes . . . by his will. The pistols there,—
(*He indicates still another corner of the console, on which there is nothing.*)
The Versailles pistols,—take them. Do not spare.
THE EMPEROR (*striking the table*): Come, sir!
THE DUKE: Don't strike the table, lest you feel
You have dislodged it, Sire,—the consul's steel!
THE EMPEROR (*terrified, looking around*):
I do not see these things!
THE DUKE: They are here, unseen.

"—Give to my son, when he has reached sixteen,—"
They gave me nothing. But in their despite,
My spirit keeps what's stolen from my sight.
Jewels and crosses, every one I see,—
All here,—three boxes of mahogany;
Snuffboxes; spurs;—no single one I lose,—
His garter buckles; buckles from his shoes;
The sword of iron and the brazen one,
And that on which an everlasting sun
Has left its brightness, in its scabbard prison,
So, when 'tis drawn, men think the sun has risen.
I have the sword belts,—six. There fails me none.
(*And he points here and there, on the empty pier-table, indicating each invisible object.*)

THE EMPEROR (*horrified*): Be silent! Peace, boy!

THE DUKE: "Given to my son
When he has reached sixteen." Sleep well, my sire!
I have the uniforms, at your desire.
—Yes, I appear to wear the Austrian white.
It is pretense. It's false. Ah, see aright,—
(*He strikes his breast, his shoulders, his arms.*)
O, you can see this blue, this red! Look hard!
Colonel? Oh, no! Lieutenant of the Guard!
I drink from the three flagons! look, from these!
Father, who gave for sisters Victories,—
Not one of your bequests is made a mock.
Even great Frederick's own alarm clock,
Which you at Potsdam so superbly stole.
Its tic-tac is this pulse-beat in my soul;
'Tis that which drives me, at the dawn of day,
Worn with the labour sleep did not repay,—
Here, to this table, that, through toil and pain,
Each evening find me readier to reign.

THE EMPEROR (*choking with fury*):
To reign? To reign? Hope not for any chance
To make the upstart's son a king in France,

Because our old blood wrought so strange a thing
And made your father's son seem half a king.

THE DUKE: At Dresden, by your pardon, as I gather,—
All you old kings seemed lackeys of my father.

THE EMPEROR (*angrily*): That fighting man?

THE DUKE: Before his suit began
You gave your daughter to that fighting man!

THE EMPEROR (*with the gesture of one who would dispell a nightmare*):
My widowed daughter lives beneath my roof.

THE DUKE (*standing before him; in a dreadful voice*):
Alas! Alas! That I am here as proof.
(*They stand looking inimically into each other's eyes.*)

THE EMPEROR (*suddenly recoiling, with a cry of sorrow*):
We loved each other, Franz! Have you forgot?

THE DUKE (*fiercely*):
My life proves your defeat. The rest is not.
You can but hate me, walking, day and night,
A living Wagram always in your sight!
(*He marches madly back and forth.*)

THE EMPEROR: Leave me! Be gone!
(*The* DUKE *hurls himself against the door of his room, pushes it open and disappears.*)

SCENE IV

The EMPEROR, METTERNICH

THE EMPEROR (*falling into his chair*):
The boy I loved! That child!

METTERNICH (*icily*): Well, shall he reign?

THE EMPEROR: Never! The thought was wild.

METTERNICH (*relentlessly*):
The harm you might have done, sire, lacking me.

THE EMPEROR: You heard the way my grandson answered me?

METTERNICH: He must be conquered.

THE EMPEROR: For his own sake, so.

METTERNICH: Your peace of mind . . . the world's peace . . .
THE EMPEROR: Oh, I know!
METTERNICH: I'll speak to him this evening.
THE EMPEROR (*in the broken voice of an old man*):
Oh, what pain
He causes me!
METTERNICH (*offering his arm to help him rise*): Come.
THE EMPEROR (*who now walks feebly, leaning on his cane*):
Yes . . . this evening.
METTERNICH: Surely it is plain
That this must be the last . . .
THE EMPEROR: Oh, me! I fear
Such scenes . . . That child!
METTERNICH (*leading him*): Come.

(*They go out. The voice of the* EMPEROR *can still be heard, repeating plaintively and half mechanically*): That child!

(*Silence. It is night. The park is deeply blue. There is moonlight on the balcony.*)

SCENE V

The DUKE, *alone*

(*Very softly he opens the door of his chamber. He looks to see if the* EMPEROR *and* METTERNICH *are gone. He hides something behind his back. The palace is still; through the open window, from the depths of the park, the faint echo of the Austrian retreat, growing fainter in the distance. The* DUKE *brings into the moonlight the object he has been hiding. It is one of his father's little hats. He comes down, carrying it reverently, and without hesitation he places it on the end of the table covered by the half open map of Europe.*)

THE DUKE: The signal!

(*The sound of the retreating bugles dies away. The* DUKE *re-enters his chamber. Behind him, the moonlight begins to steal in, spreading its sense of mystery; the moonbeams*

glide as far as the table; suddenly they gleam upon it. On the whiteness of the map, the little hat shows black exceedingly.)

SCENE VI

FLAMBEAU; *later, a* SERVANT *and* SEDLINSKY

FLAMBEAU (*enters, Right*): Here.
The time has come. The signal,—did he show it?
(*He repeats, solemnly imitating the* DUKE'S *inflections.*)
"Flambeau," says he, "you cannot help but know it."
(*He seeks everywhere.*)
High? low? black or white? Now, what kind of a rig
Would he fix? . . . big or little?
(*He comes to the table; sees the hat; leaps back.*)
Ah! (*and with an ecstatic smile, saluting*) Little and big!
(*He goes back to the window.*)
The Countess in the park has made me swear
I'd tell her if I found the signal there.
(*He has taken his handkerchief from his pocket, but hurriedly crams it back.*)
No! A white flag would bust the luck! Old fool!

A SERVANT (*crossing the salon, carrying a little lamp, goes toward the* DUKE'S *chamber*):
His Highness' student's lamp . . .

FLAMBEAU (*at a bound snatches it from his hand*):
But, stupid mule,
It's going out! . . . It needs air. . . . That's the trick . . .
(*He steps out on the balcony.*)
You raise it, so, three times. You lift the wick . . .
(*He carefully turns it up and hands it to the servant.*)
And that's all. See?

THE SERVANT (*going on, shrugs his shoulders*):
You think you're smart.

FLAMBEAU: I do.

(*The* SERVANT *enters the* DUKE'S *room.* FLAMBEAU *comes*

down, rubbing his hands together, and, stopping before the little hat, says with respectful familiarity):

To-morrow! All's prepared.

SEDLINSKY (*entering by the farther door, Right*): The Duke?

FLAMBEAU (*pointing to the chamber, Left*): There.

SEDLINSKY: Watch, you!

—A post of trust.

FLAMBEAU: Yes, yes.

SEDLINSKY: Be sure you earn

That trust. Are you the Piedmontese?

(FLAMBEAU *nods.*) You know your turn?

FLAMBEAU: To be here every night. I'm here.

SEDLINSKY: What's done?

FLAMBEAU: When there is quiet all about Schoenbrunn

I double-lock the doors, take out the keys. . . .

SEDLINSKY: That's very good. You never part from these?

Carry them . . . ?

FLAMBEAU: Always.

SEDLINSKY: Never sleep?

FLAMBEAU: Oh, no.

SEDLINSKY: Then you mount guard . . . ?

FLAMBEAU (*pointing to the threshold of the* DUKE'S *chamber*):

Right here.

(*The servant has come out of the* DUKE'S *room and left by the door on the right.*)

SEDLINSKY: That's good. Now go. . . .

It's time . . . and lock them.

FLAMBEAU (*locking the nearer door*): Locked.

SEDLINSKY: The keys:

FLAMBEAU (*taking out the keys and putting them in his pocket*):

The keys!

SEDLINSKY (*going out by the farther door, to allow* FLAMBEAU *to lock it after him*):

None save the Emperor has their mates. Guard these.

Watch well!

FLAMBEAU (*locking the door after him and smiling grimly*):

As always!

SCENE VII

FLAMBEAU, *alone*

(*He takes the key from the second door and puts that, too, in his pocket; then, quickly and noiselessly, at the two doors, he presses down with his thumb the leather flaps that close the key-holes, saying in a whisper*):

And let's kiss good night
The eye-lids of them key-holes. Out of sight!

(*Sure of not being seen, he listens for a moment, then begins to unbutton his lackey's coat.*)

SEDLINSKY'S VOICE (*through the closed door*):

Good night, the Piedmontese!

FLAMBEAU (*starts and instinctively begins to button his coat. But a glance reassures him, and, shrugging his shoulders, he answers coolly, while taking off his livery and throwing it in a corner*): Good night, my Count.

(*He already looks gaunt, in his shirt sleeves, with his lackey's waistcoat of braided plush. He begins to unbutton this waistcoat.*)

THE VOICE OF SEDLINSKY: And now, mount guard, my man.

FLAMBEAU (*superbly, while discarding his waistcoat*):

Yes, sir, I . . . mount.

(*He stands, thin and muscular, in his old blue grenadier's coat; the coat tails that have been tucked up, behind, under his lackey's vest, fall; the outline, for the rest, shows the white breeches and stockings of his lackey's uniform.*

SEDLINSKY'S VOICE (*farther away*):

That's good. Watch well. Good night.

FLAMBEAU (*saluting ironically*): Good night.

(*He has grown taller by a cubit; he smooths his wrinkled uniform; stretches his arms with their chevrons; raises the flattened shoulder straps; he combs his dressed and powdered hair with his huge fingers till it bristles straight up; he goes to the pier-table, left, and takes from among its treasures a short sabre, a bearskin and a gun; he stops for*

a second before the mirror to arrange his moustache in grenadier fashion; with two strides he reaches the DUKE'S *threshold and stands at attention.*) And here I be!
All straight and thin and rather raggety,
Locked in till daylight, safe from all surprise,
My shaggy eyebrows over watchful eyes.
A man can breathe in this here uniform,
And stand in decent military form,
—Gun, right; hand on right nipple;—that's well done;
I guarded father and I'll guard the son;
So, every night, right on his threshold here,
Giving himself his orders, clean and clear,
Proud of a showy trick, a risk well run,
An old French soldier watches at Schoenbrunn.
(*He begins to march back and forth in the moonlight, like a sentinel.*) For the last time
(*Winking toward the* PRINCE'S *door.*)
And you there never know.
Just for myself—luxury—not for show!
(*He stops, his eyes shining.*)
A trick like that and not a soul to see!
Just tell yourself "Well done!" That's lux-u-ree.
(*He resumes his march.*)
At Schoenbrunn . . . in their teeth . . . and never flinched!
I'm satisfied! . . . I'm splendid! . . . I am . . .
(*A key turns in the key-hole, Right.*) . . . pinched!

SCENE VIII

FLAMBEAU, METTERNICH

FLAMBEAU (*with a bound is out of the moonlight and in the darkest corner, Left and Back*): Who got hisself a key?
(*The door opens.* METTERNICH *enters. He has taken, in crossing the halls, a heavy silver sconce, all lighted, with which he lights his way. He closes the door, saying, in a determined voice*):

No, no. That scene
Shall not occur again!

FLAMBEAU (*aside, amazed*): Nepomucene!

METTERNICH (*going toward the table, preoccupied*):

This evening . . . here . . . I'll speak and it is done.
(*He sets the sconce on the table, and in doing so sees the little hat.*)
I wonder when the Duke was given one?
(*Smiling.*) Ah! the archduchess. That's her doing. Very
Imprudent . . . very like her.
(*To the hat*) Ho, Legendary,
It's a long time . . . (*With a little, patronizing salute.*)
Good day!
(*Ironically, as if the hat had permitted an audience.*)
I may remain?
(*He makes a sign, as though it were too late.*)
Twelve years of splendour look on me, in vain,
From your small pyramid, remote and dim.
I fear no longer. (*He touches it and laughs.*)
Here's the leathern rim
Whereby one kept you shapely, free from flaws
Though often lifted, to evoke applause!
You fanned his cheek after a victory!
Drop from his careless hand and there would be
Kings, kneeling, to restore you for his crown.
To-day you're nothing but a hand-me-down.
If I should toss you from that window there,
Where would you end, old cocked hat?

FLAMBEAU (*in the shadow, aside*): Why, I swear,
In a museum.

METTERNICH (*turning the hat in his hands*): Ugly, and so small!
Yet stay! . . . Are you so little after all?
(*Shrugging his shoulders and speaking with increasing rancor.*)
No. It is big. Enormous. 'Tis the plan
Of self-enlargement of a little man. . . .

—A hat-shop . . . there the legend had its start.
The real Napoleon is . . .
(*He turns the hat upside down and holding it close to the light looks for the maker's name on the inside band.*)
. . . Let's see . . . Poupart!
(*And, suddenly dropping his half bantering tone.*)
—Oh, do not fancy that my hate can slumber.
First, for thy shape! Ah, reasons without number,—
But first for this, thy bats' wings hovering so
Above the battle, hat winged like a crow!
And for thy lines implacable and clear,
Cleaving the sky line when defeat was near,
And o'er the crimsoned field, the battle's dun,
Thy half-disk rising like a darkened sun!
—I hate thy lining, devil's ambuscade,
Thou juggler's hat, that, black and swift, hast played
Thy conjurer's tricks with armies, peoples, kings,
Covered them;—presto! changed are all these things!
I hate thee for thy pride, and O I hate
Thy simpleness, a pose for seeming great;
For thy delight, ringed by gold crowns that melt,
In being, frankly, just a piece of felt.
I hate thee for the hand that sometimes found
And plucked thee off and flung thee to the ground;
For the ten years you stalked across my sleep;
For the salutes I gave thee, I, to heap
Title on title! Yet when all was said
The listening upstart kept thee on his head!
(*And as the memories crowd, he gives way to an outburst of pure malevolence.*)
I hate thee victorious, new, acclaimed!
I hate thee still, old, broken and defamed!
I hate thee for the shadow, mighty, tall,
Thou wilt forever throw on history's wall!
Thy impudent cockade still seems to rise
Above the jacobin's great bloodshot eyes.

I hate the echoes that thou bearst to me,
Thou great black conch shell, tossed from that huge sea
Whose sullen roar thou makest me hear again,
That sea whose waves were made of marching men!
I hate thee for the Frenchman's pride that scorns,
—Thou two-horned thing!—the blare of lesser horns.
(*He tosses the hat on the table and leans above it.*)
I hate thee for Beranger,—for Raffet,—
The songs that praise thee,—sketches that display,—
For every ray of glory shed on thee.
I hate thee! hate thee! Fiercely, ceaselessly
Till thy triangle, ugly, mean, uncouth,
Robbed of its legend is again in sooth
What it should still have been,—what it began,—
The common headgear of a fighting man!
(*He stops, arrested by the hour, the silence, the place; and with a nervous smile*):
But . . . suddenly . . . it's odd . . . the present dims . . .
The past grows clearer . . . half-amusing whims . . .
(*He passes his hand over his forehead.*)
You look so much at home, it half appears
The clock turns backward,—backward twenty years;
For it was here he placed you,—aye, and so,—
When he was here, just twenty years ago!
(*He looks about him, shuddering.*)
'Twas to this hall one meekly had to come
And wait until he chose to leave his room;
Princes, dukes, magyars huddled in a group,
Their eyes fixed on you, like a hungry troop
Of lions, watching, with respectful rage,
The tamer's hat forgotten in the cage!
(*He withdraws a little, in spite of himself, still gazing at the hat, mysterious, dramatic, in the stillness of the room.*)
He placed you so,—it all might be to-day,—
The arms . . . the papers. . . . Almost one might say
That he in passing flung you on that map.

This Bonaparte! Indeed I think mayhap
If I should turn . . . I'd see . . . still watching so,
A grenadier who guards his threshold . . .
(*He turns, half against his will, and sees, standing in front of the* DUKE'S *door,* FLAMBEAU, *who, with one noiseless step, has come into the moonlight.*) Oh!
(*Silence.* FLAMBEAU, *motionless, stands guard. His moustache and his shoulder straps are snow white in the moonlight. The buttons with their eagles glimmer on his breast.* METTERNICH *recoils and rubs his eyes.*)
Oh, no, no, no! . . . What fever has misled? . . .
Conversing with a hat has turned my head!
(*He looks, he comes nearer.* FLAMBEAU *stands motionless, in the classic pose of a grenadier, hands clasped on the butt of his bayonet, which gleams blue.*)
The moon is playing tricks. What can it be?
What have we here? Let's see! let's see! let's see!
(*He goes up to* FLAMBEAU, *saying in a stern voice*):
Now, what's this sorry jest?

FLAMBEAU (*pointing the bayonet*): Halt! Who goes there?
METTERNICH (*starting back*): The devil!
FLAMBEAU: Advance and give the sign, then.
METTERNICH: I declare
(*He laughs constrainedly and tries to approach.*)
The farce is excellent, but . . .
FLAMBEAU: Who goes there?
METTERNICH (*recoiling*): All very droll. . . .
FLAMBEAU (*bayonet fixed*): One step and you are dead.
METTERNICH: But . . .
FLAMBEAU: Speak low!
METTERNICH: Permit . . .
FLAMBEAU: The Emperor sleeps. Speak low, I said.
METTERNICH: You say . . .
FLAMBEAU: 'Sh!
METTERNICH (*furiously*): I am Austria's Chancellor, I . . .
I am all. I dare all!

FLAMBEAU: But don't you try.
METTERNICH (*out of patience*):
I wish to see the Duke of Reichstadt.
FLAMBEAU: Rot!
METTERNICH (*unable to trust his ears*): What's that?
FLAMBEAU: Reichstadt? Why, I don't know Reichstadt.
Auerstadt, Elchingen are dukes, may be.
Reichstadt's no duke. It ain't no victory.
METTERNICH: But we are at Schoenbrunn.
FLAMBEAU: Well, can't I guess?
We're quartered here, thanks to our new success.
We're here, with fife and drum and rat-tat-tat,
To show a world of meddlers where they're at.
METTERNICH: What? How? A new success?
FLAMBEAU: A buster! Fine!
METTERNICH: But this is July tenth, eighteen and . . .
FLAMBEAU: Nine.
METTERNICH: I'll not go mad!
FLAMBEAU (*suddenly coming nearer*):
Where are you from? It's queer
That you ain't in your bed instead of here.
METTERNICH (*startled*): I?
FLAMBEAU: Who let this Artaban come round, disturbing
The Mameluke? You dodged beneath his turban?
METTERNICH: The Mameluke?
FLAMBEAU (*scandalized*): No discipline at all!
METTERNICH: But . . .
FLAMBEAU (*standing his ground*):
You come here in the night, here to the hall?
METTERNICH: I . . .
FLAMBEAU: You crossed de Rosa's chamber in the night?
Was ne'er a voltigeur on guard in sight?
METTERNICH: A volt . . .
FLAMBEAU: You crossed the small rotunda mighty big,
And ne'er a yatagan shaved off that wig?

Passed the white hall and non-coms in a bunch
Stood 'round the stove a-makin' tea or punch?
Likely you didn't meet no whiskered guard
In pantry, stables nor about the yard?
And in the galleries, the brigadiers
Let you slip by? Where was their eyes and ears?
(*He is more and more overwhelmed with indignation.*)
Reckon you crossed the oval cabinet
And not a marshal asked you would you set?

METTERNICH (*shrinking back under this disquieting mass of detail*): A marshal . . .

FLAMBEAU: Is the guard-dog a lap-dog? . . . As you will . . .

METTERNICH: I entered . . .

FLAMBEAU: This palace then stands open like a mill?
Came through the passageway, to cap the trick?
Nobody there? The porter must be sick.
His body servant? Absent? Secretary?
Shut in his own portefolio? Likely, very.

METTERNICH: But . . .

FLAMBEAU: Instead of list'nin' for suspicious sneezes,
The Aide was making eyes at Vienneses?

METTERNICH: But . . .

FLAMBEAU: The Moors were praying Al-Il-Allah-ho?
Well, anyway, I'm here, I'll have you know!
And if . . . Somebody . . . takes them by surprise,
There's some of them will wipe their weepin' eyes.

METTERNICH (*frenzied, and trying to pass the guard and reach the gilt bell cord hanging against the wall*): I will . . .

FLAMBEAU (*interposing his gaunt frame, saying in a terrible voice*): Just wake him, if you want a quarrel!
(*Tenderly.*) He's sleeping on his narrow bed of laurel!

METTERNICH (*falling into an armchair by the table*):
I'll tell this epic dream. . . . I hope 'twill stick.
(*He puts his finger into the flame of one of the candles in the sconce and snatches it back*): But this flame . . .

FLAMBEAU: Burns.

METTERNICH (*touching the point of the bayonet, which* FLAMBEAU *has never lowered*): This bayonet can . . .

FLAMBEAU: Prick!

METTERNICH (*rising with a bound*):

I wake . . . and yet . . . and yet . . .

FLAMBEAU: 'Sh! You've forgot!

METTERNICH (*has, for one moment, the anguish of a man who wonders if he has dreamed fifteen years of history*):

Helena? Waterloo? All?

FLAMBEAU (*sincerely, from a dream*): Water . . . what?

(*He listens.*) The Emperor stirs!

METTERNICH: He?

FLAMBEAU: Him, Pop-Eye, of course.

You look as white as any trumpet horse.

(*Listening, as footsteps seem to draw near the closed door.*)

He's fumbling at the lock . . . light must be dim . . .

He's coming out. There!

(*Reproachful, despairing.*) You have wakened him!

METTERNICH: He cannot come . . . who has come out before!

'Tis not his hand that fumbles at the door!

I'm not afraid! . . . It is the Duke, his son. . . .

The Duke, I'm sure. . . .

(*The door opens.*)

FLAMBEAU (*in a sonorous voice*): Emperor Napoleon!

(*He presents arms.* METTERNICH *steps back. But instead of the terrible little heavy-set figure which this Grenadier of the Guard presenting arms almost expects, there is upon the threshold the trembling form of a poor child, far too slender, who, coughing, has left his books to see who is at his door; a boy who stops, white as his uniform, the student's lamp raised above his head,—a figure rendered still more feminine by the loosened collar, whence white linen escapes, and by the curls which look more blonde than ever under the rays of the lamp.*)

SCENE IX

The Same. The DUKE; *later, some* LACKEYS

METTERNICH (*rushing toward him, with a nervous laugh*):
It's you, your Highness! It is you, yes, yes!
Ah, I am glad!
THE DUKE (*ironically*): Whence comes this tenderness?
METTERNICH: Nay, truly, I believed—it all seemed true!
Another would come out!
FLAMBEAU (*like a man waking from a dream*):
I thought so, too!
THE DUKE (*turning toward him, sees, with terror, the uniform he wears*): God! God! What have you done?
FLAMBEAU: Luxury!
METTERNICH (*who has reached the bell cord, pulling it and calling*): Come! Help!
THE DUKE: Fly!
FLAMBEAU (*running back*): The window!
THE DUKE (*trying to restrain him*): The sentinel will shoot!
FLAMBEAU: Perhaps. Good-bye!
THE DUKE: That long stretch through the wood!
METTERNICH: It's plain, in short,
They'll shoot him running.
FLAMBEAU: That does cut it short.
THE DUKE (*eagerly, seeing* FLAMBEAU'S *discarded livery*):
Put on your livery!
METTERNICH (*running and putting his foot on it*): No!
FLAMBEAU (*disdainfully*): You ran too soon.
A butterfly don't want his old cocoon.
(*And, gun over his shoulder, defiantly keeping his full equipment, he throws himself over the balcony*):
I'll see you later!
THE DUKE (*running after him*): 'Tis folly!
FLAMBEAU (*quick and low, to the* DUKE): 'Sh, I've had
That Crusoe hole in mind! The ball, to-morrow!

THE DUKE: Oh, 'tis mad!

(*He throws one leg over the balcony railing.*)

FLAMBEAU (*disappearing*): I'll be there!

THE DUKE (*calling softly*): Hush! Not a sound!

METTERNICH: If he

Would only break his neck!

(*One hears* FLAMBEAU'S *voice, coolly humming, in the darkness, the marching song, "As Victory went a-singing."*)

THE DUKE (*terrified*): Hein?

METTERNICH (*stupefied*): He sings?

FLAMBEAU (*in the park*): For lux-u-ree.

(*He continues*): *"The quarry is in sight."*

(*A report. A moment of silence and tense listening. Then the voice in the distance gaily takes up the song, "O Liberty."*)

THE DUKE (*with a cry of joy*): Missed!

(METTERNICH *precipitately rushes, after the* DUKE, *to the balcony and follows with his eyes* FLAMBEAU'S *retreating figure.*)

METTERNICH (*spitefully*): In the darkness, very neatly done.

THE DUKE (*proudly*): Indeed, he's not a stranger at Schoenbrunn.

METTERNICH (*to a number of lackeys who come in, Right, dismissing them with a gesture*):

Nothing! . . . Go back! . . . It was too late you heard.

(*The lackeys go out.*)

SCENE X

METTERNICH, *The* DUKE

THE DUKE (*to* METTERNICH, *in an almost threatening tone*): To the police, to-morrow, not a word!

METTERNICH (*smiling*): I do not tell the joke that's played on me.

(*And as the* DUKE, *turning his back to him, starts to his room,* METTERNICH *asks coolly*):

As for this Grumbler guardsman, what is he?
You're not Napoleon.

THE DUKE (*already on the threshold of his chamber, stops, haughtily*): No? Who has said . . . ?

METTERNICH (*pointing to the little bicorne on the table*):
You have the little hat, but not the head.

THE DUKE (*with a dolorous cry*):
Ah, you once more have found the word to chill
And prick enthusiasm! Yet I will
This time so use it, while this new hope surges,
—The thorn-prick sickens but the whiplash urges,—
I will leap forward, since you flay me so.
"But not the head," you say?
(*He marches to* METTERNICH, *with his arms crossed on his breast*): How do you know?
(METTERNICH *contemplates for an instant this prince, erect before him, in his boyish anger, full of confidence and force; then, in a cutting tone*):
How do I know?
(*He takes the lighted sconce from the table, goes toward the great mirror hanging against the wall, and holds the light aloft.*)
Ah, look in this glass!
See the pure pallor of your features pass!
Look at this mass, so heavy, yet so fair,
This weight of curls! I tell you, look you there!

THE DUKE (*not willing to go to the glass, but glancing at his reflection from afar and as it were in spite of himself*):
No!

METTERNICH: Behold, a fatal ghostly company!

THE DUKE: No!
Unknowing, you are all of Germany,
And all of Spain. These in your nature swarming
Have made you sad, and proud, and weak, and charming.

THE DUKE (*turning his head away and yet irresistibly drawn to the mirror*): No! No!

METTERNICH: You always felt that you would fail!
You reign? Why, come! . . . You would be, pure and pale,
One of those rulers always questioning fate
Whom men imprison, lest they abdicate.

THE DUKE (*grasping, in a wild effort to shift its light from the mirror, the silver sconce which* METTERNICH *lifts to the glass*): No! No!

METTERNICH: Your head's not shaped for action,—energy;
That brow means languor,—fancies! Look and see!

THE DUKE (*looking, and passing his hand over his forehead*):
My brow?

METTERNICH: Your Highness, look and understand!
You smooth that brow, and with a child's soft hand.

THE DUKE (*looking with horror at his hand in the glass*):
My hand?

METTERNICH: Look at the fingers, feeble, fluttering things.
One sees them painted, with a weight of rings!

THE DUKE (*hiding his hand*): No!

METTERNICH: Look at your eyes where ancient phantoms rise,
Ancestral ghosts . . .

THE DUKE (*face to face with his reflection, his eyes big with horror*): My eyes?

METTERNICH: Mark well those eyes,
Where other eyes, set in some corpse's head,
Dream of the pyre or weep more ancient dead.
And you, so scrupulous, have this emprise,
To reign in France,—you, with those haunted eyes?

THE DUKE (*struggling to reassure himself*): My father . . .

METTERNICH (*implacable*): Is your father in your sight?
Look for his features! Look! Hold high the light!
—He wanted, jealous of our ancient blood,
To age with that his new and turgid flood;
Only its weakness he has stolen away,
Its half-mad melancholy! . . .

THE DUKE: Mercy, pray!

METTERNICH: Ah, see your pallor in the glass!

THE DUKE: Enough!
METTERNICH: Your very lips are molded of the stuff
That made the doll's mouth, pretty, red and proud,
Of her whose head was forfeit to the crowd.
He won our evil luck, too,—he who played
For such high stakes! Look well!
THE DUKE (*his strength failing*): I am afraid!
METTERNICH: Can you to-night look in this silvered glass
Not seeing all your race behind you pass?
—There gibbers Joan the fool,—behold her plain!
That, slowly creeping on the mirrored pane,
Is the pale king on whose glass crypt mists gather.
THE DUKE (*rallying*): Nay, 'tis the ardent pallor of my father.
METTERNICH: Rudolph, his lions,—bloody, struggling corpses!
THE DUKE: Nay, the First Consul! Hark! The arms! The horses!
METTERNICH (*still showing in the mirror other ill-fated forebears*):
He makes gold in his cave . . . You know that story?
THE DUKE: I see him, but in Egypt making glory!
METTERNICH: Ah, ha! And Charles, that tonsured spectre,—he who played
At being monk, self buried!
THE DUKE (*wildly*): To my aid,
My father!
METTERNICH: The Escurial! Grisly shapes,
Black walls!
THE DUKE: By white woods, see, my soul escapes,—
Compiegne! Malmaison!
METTERNICH: But you see? You see?
THE DUKE: Drums of Arcola, drown this voice for me!
METTERNICH: The mirror swarms . . .
THE DUKE (*shielding his head with his arms as if terrible wings beat upon him*): O, Victories, come back!
Swoop, golden eagles, clutch these eagles black!
METTERNICH: Dead are those eagles!

THE DUKE: No!

METTERNICH: Broken the drum!

THE DUKE: No!

METTERNICH: Across the glass a thousand Hapsburgs come,
And all resemble you!

THE DUKE (*frenzied, snatching at the sconce which* METTERNICH *holds*): I'll break the glass!

METTERNICH: Others, still others!

THE DUKE (*brandishing the heavy silver sconce which* METTERNICH *relinquishes at last, with a maddened gesture strikes the mirror*): Broken! There will pass
Never another!

(*He strikes furiously; the mirror falls; the candles go out; darkness; the crashing of shivered glass; the* DUKE *hurls himself back, with a shriek of triumph*):
Gone!

METTERNICH (*already on the threshold, turns, and, as he goes out*): Be sure the rather,
One still remains!

THE DUKE (*trembling at these words, and mad with fright, cries into the blackness*): No, no! Not I! Not I!

(*But his voice fails. He beats the air with his arms, turns in the black shadows, and falls, a lamentable white heap, before the broken mirror.*)
Help! Help me, Father!

(*Curtain*)

ACT IV

Bruised Wings

The curtain rises, to the murmur of flutes and violins, upon a fairy scene in the Roman Ruins of the Park of Schoenbrunn.

These ruins, wholly artificial, of course, were nevertheless designed by a skillful archeologist, and very happily set against a little wooded hill, clothed with soft mosses, they are beautiful in the night, which enlarges and idealizes them.

In the midst of picturesque underbrush, a large and very tall Roman gate heightens the effect, and permits in perspective under its irregular arch a glimpse of a turfed path which lifts like a velvet ribbon to a distant crossway, where a white statue seems to arrest one with a gesture.

In front of this gate is a little pond, and divinities of stone hide in the reeds about it.

And there are half crumbling colonnades along which masqueraders come and go, and stone steps whereon all the characters of Italian Comedy ascend and descend, for it is a fancy ball with ridottoes, dominoes, Venetian capes, strange beplumed hats, black velvet masks edged with lace, mysterious, intriguing.

Two orange trees, clipped round; against the trunk of one, a rustic bench.

Here and there are fragments of bas-relief; shafts of columns overgrown with ivy; fallen and broken statues.

The lanterns hung at wide intervals are discreetly dim; they shine like glow-worms; there is no effort to eclipse the moonlight.

The section of the park reserved for the masqueraders has been enclosed with a lattice; one sees on the right footmen who are receiving the wraps of the guests as they enter.

On the left, a door made of leafy garlands is the entrance to a

tiny theatre. On this side, one hears from the back, sounds of merriment; it is there that the dancing takes place. From this side, too, one has glimpses of brighter lights and catches strains of music. A hidden orchestra plays waltzes by Schubert, Lanner and Strauss, and plays them in Vienna fashion, with very languorous charm.

SCENE I

MASQUERADERS; *later,* METTERNICH *and the* FRENCH ENVOY; GENTZ, SEDLINSKY, FANNY ELSSLER

A VENETIAN DOMINO (*to another, indicating the passing masks*):
Who is the fool?
THE OTHER: Don't know.
FIRST DOMINO: The Cardinal?
SECOND DOMINO: Don't know.
FIRST DOMINO: The Punch?
SECOND DOMINO: I do not know at all.
A MATACHIN: It is delicious!
A CLOWN: All, incognito.
A MERRY-ANDREW (*running across the scene, and with a flying leap catching a Marquise around the waist*): Your ear!
THE MARQUISE: Why?
THE MERRY-ANDREW (*mysteriously*): Hush! My secret! 'Sh!
(*He steals a kiss and makes his escape.*)
A CLOWN (*seated on the fallen shaft of a pillar*): Watteau . . .
THE MERRY-ANDREW (*repassing and seizing an Isabella round the waist*): Your ear.
THE CLOWN: Would love this masquerade . . .
ISABELLA (*to the* MERRY-ANDREW): Why?
MERRY ANDREW (*mysteriously*): 'Sh! 'Sh! My secret!
(*Steals a kiss and runs off.*)
THE CLOWN: In the ruins' shade.
A HARLEQUIN (*dreaming, one foot on the rim of the fountain*):
All is uncertain; shifting to and fro
Water and moonlight, hearts and music, go.
(METTERNICH, *in court dress under a great domino of black*

velvet, enters with the French military attaché, who is also in evening dress and domino. METTERNICH *condescendingly explains to him the details of the ball.*)

METTERNICH: Then, sir, we have a bit of contrast here,—
Deep shadow, deeper silence, yet so near
The lights, the dancers and the merry play
Of flutes. . . .

THE ENVOY (*admiringly*): Oh, it is truly . . .

METTERNICH: Rather pretty, eh?
(*He points to the right.*)
There, see.

THE ENVOY (*with respectful surprise*):
You condescend to be my guide?

METTERNICH (*taking his arm*):
My dear boy, I confess to greater pride
Than in—the Congress of Verona, say—
In such a ball as this; the interplay
Of worldliness and pure rusticity.
The entrance, there;—the dressing room, you see,
Where in a moment, chatting, one may change
To king or carter,—anything that's strange.
(*Indicating the door, at the left.*)
Next, down this grassy path, you'll find, dear sir,
Close to the Fount of Love, the theatre.
It really is a gem. To-night they tell,
Certain court stars, the story of Michel . . .
Someone or other,—some rose-water scene
By some French playwright. What's his name? Eugene? . . .

THE ENVOY: One sups? . . .

METTERNICH: Here.

THE ENVOY: Here?

METTERNICH: From every orange tree
A cloth will snow, and silver, rain. You'll see.

THE ENVOY: From orange trees?

METTERNICH (*charmed with the impression he is making*):
You'll see the footman roll

The boxes to this spot: About each bole
Two couples will be seated, hungry, gay,

THE ENVOY: A rustic supper. You must let me say
I find it charming.

METTERNICH (*modestly*): Yes? As to grave affairs . . .
(*To a lackey.*)
Go tell them that's enough of Slavic airs.
(*The lackey runs off. Returning to the* ENVOY.)
I don't defer them to-morrow. I
Can't even stay to supper. That reply
To the Hospodars awaits me and I want
To expedite . . .
(*To another lackey, indicating the door of the theatre.*)
Those wreaths are somewhat scant.
(*Returning to the* ENVOY.)
I plan a ball, and then, before the feast,
I turn, to solve the Question of the East.
I love to rule a nation, or a dance,
Be arbiter of fate . . .

THE ENVOY (*bowing*): And elegance.

GENTZ (*who has entered with a woman who wears a domino and is closely masked, coming toward them, a little merry*):
That's good . . . arbiter elegantiarum.

METTERNICH: Gentz? Speaking Latin? You've been drinking.

GENTZ (*a bit unsteadily, trying to repeat*): Rum.

METTERNICH: At Fanny's one must linger long at dinner.
That old affair! Truly, a hardened sinner!

GENTZ (*indignantly*): Me? Fanny? That's done!

METTERNICH (*incredulously*): Ah?
(*He sees the prefect of police, who is looking for him.*)
Sedlinsky?

GENTZ (*his hand on his heart*): Done!

SEDLINSKY (*to* METTERNICH): One word.
(*He speaks to him in a low voice.*)

GENTZ (*still talking to* METTERNICH, *who walks off*): Done!
(*The domino who has come with him takes his arm. He turns, and in another voice*):

Oh, I was wrong to bring you, little one,—
A dancer, Fanny!—reckless beyond measure
For me to bring you!

FANNY: Here I dance for pleasure!

(*She pirouettes. The Frenchman watches her admiringly.*)

GENTZ (*anxiously*):
They'll guess! Dance badly! You are much too light.

METTERNICH (*to* SEDLINSKY): A plot, you think?

SEDLINSKY: Yes, at the ball, to-night.

METTERNICH: I have no fear . . .

GENTZ (*following* FANNY, *who dances away from him*):
Tell me why you had
This crazy wish to come?

FANNY: A whim . . . a fad.

(*She dances off,* GENTZ *following; also the* FRENCH ENVOY.)

METTERNICH (*to* SEDLINSKY):
I fear no longer. I have slain his pride.
He will avoid the ball. He longs to hide.

SEDLINSKY: There is a plot.

METTERNICH: Ah, bah!

SEDLINSKY: Women.

METTERNICH: Eh? Somewhat shady?

SEDLINSKY: Great ladies!

METTERNICH (*ironically*): Ah!

SEDLINSKY: Some Greeks, a Polish lady.
The Princess Grazalcowitch . . .

METTERNICH: They employ
Alarming names.
(*To a passing footman*) Bring me a sandwich, boy.

SEDLINSKY: You laugh? 'Sh . . .
(*He points out a group of Mauve Dominoes who enter furtively.*) Fleeing the lighted grove,
Seeking the shadows, here they come.
(*He draws* METTERNICH *behind an orange tree, where both remain hidden.*)

SCENE II

The Mauve Dominoes; METTERNICH *and* SEDLINSKY, *concealed*

FIRST DOMINO (*to another*): My love,
How sweet is danger that for him we share.
THE SECOND DOMINO (*delightedly*): Let us conspire!
THIRD DOMINO: He has such pale gold hair.
(*All the conspirators have a slight Greek or Polish accent.*)
FIRST DOMINO: Yes, darlin', one can see his brow surroun'
With a pale halo, like a budding crown.
ANOTHER DOMINO: It is his double charm,—so frail, so fon',—
To be fair Bonaparte, or Hamlet blon'.
A NUMBER (*enjoying every thrill*): Let us conspire!
THE FIRST (*solemnly*): I am having made for me
By Stieger, at Vienna, a gold bee.
SECOND DOMINO (*impetuously*):
Why, what a goosie! At Vienna? No!
Mine is Parisian-made, from Odiot.
ANOTHER (*gravely*): And I propose with all my toilets
To wear a huge bouquet of violets.
ALL (*with enthusiasm*): Oh, lovely, Princess!
ONE (*who has not spoken before, suddenly inspired*):
And let us risk returning
To Empire styles!
FIRST DOMINO (*hurriedly*): For evening,—not for morning!
ANOTHER: Those short waists are more trying than this shade is.
ALL TOGETHER: The frills! The puffs! O, love . . . !
METTERNICH (*coming out*): Good evening, ladies!
ALL (*with a shriek of fright*): Ah, God!
METTERNICH (*laughing heartily*):
Your plot's astonishing, I vow.
Conspire. . . . Ha-ha! . . . Conspire!
(*He goes out laughing, followed by* SEDLINSKY. *The sound of their mirth is lost in the distance. Immediately, the conspirators, who have scattered as if in flight, reassemble*

and form a close circle around the Domino, whom they have addressed as PRINCESS.)

THE PRINCESS: And now
That, thanks to all this frivolous display,
The doubts Sedlinsky woke are stolen away,
We'll prove, beneath our Machiavellian rule,
The veriest Metternich the merest fool.

ALL: Yes.

THE PRINCESS: This evening, everyone must know her part.

ALL: Yes.

THE PRINCESS: Disperse among the dancers.

(*The Mauve Dominoes separate and mingle with the other masqueraders.*)

SCENE III

All Manner of Maskers; GENTZ; *the* FRENCH ENVOY; FANNY ELSSLER *and others; later,* TIBURCE *and* THERESE OF LORGET

A GROUP OF MASKERS (*pursuing along the colonnades a masquerader with a huge nose, who evades them*):
He's too smart!
That must be Sandor! . . . Furstenberg, I guess!

A CROCODILE (*halting to call their attention to somebody else*):
That Bear does waltz divinely, I profess.

(*The whole band precipitates itself after the Bear.*)

GENTZ (*who has seated himself on a grassy bank, is surrounded by several pretty dominoes, and watches others pass*):
What's sad Elvira?

A COLUMBINE: A star.

GENTZ (*to please his companion*): A light o' love? I see.

THE COLUMBINE: Thecla, the two-faced?

GENTZ (*laughing*): As a honey bee.

THE ENVOY (*crossing, in pursuit of* FANNY ELSSLER):

No way on earth to guess this domino!
An English woman?
FANNY (*fleeing*): Ya.
THE ENVOY (*startled*): A German?
FANNY: No!
(*She disappears, and the* ENVOY *follows her.*)
THE COLUMBINE (*sitting down close to* GENTZ):
The Viscount comes as doge?
A CLEOPATRA: Yes, . . . great Dalmatic.
GENTZ: The baronness is, then, the Adriatic?
(TIBURCE *has come in with* THERESE. *He comes as* CAPTAIN SPEZZAFER. THERESE *wears a soft blue tunic, silver-sprinkled, and decked with water lilies and long gleaming grasses. She comes as* A SPRING.)
TIBURCE: The Parma trip's abandoned?
THERESE: Not at all.
The Duchess merely stays to see the ball.
(*She indicates a masked woman who passes, accompanied by a man in domino.*)
There . . . with Bombelles. . . . Her domino is green.
TIBURCE (*in a quarrelsome tone*):
The sooner gone, the better. I have seen
—And would not longer have endured, apart . . .
Your . . . friendship . . . with the little Bonaparte.
THERESE (*haughtily*): I beg your pardon?
TIBURCE: We have rather smiled
On ladies of our line by kings beguiled.
A hidden handkerchief is no dishonour
If lilies be embroidered in the corner;
But honour will disclaim a handkerchief
That bears the weedy Bonapartist leaf.
Woe to the Ogre's son. . . .
THERESE: Hein?
TIBURCE: . . . Our blood suborning.
THERESE: Brother, the words you speak . . .
TIBURCE (*with a little salute*): Are words of warning.

(*He walks away.* THERESE *follows him with her eyes; then, shrugging her shoulders, joins a passing group.*)

A BEAR (*entering with a Chinese Girl on his arm*):
You knew me for a diplomat, because . . . ?

THE CHINESE GIRL (*giving his paws a tap with her fan*):
You know so well the way to hide your claws.

THE BEAR (*tenderly*): If you would love me . . .

THE CHINESE GIRL: You would sell your hide?

(*At this moment, an enormous woman passes, costumed as a little shepherdess of the time of Louis XV.*)

ALL THE LADIES, AROUND GENTZ: Oh!

GENTZ: That shepherdess must fold her flock inside!

THE MERRY-ANDREW (*crossing the scene, runs up and seizing the fat Shepherdess around the waist, whispers*):
Your ear?

THE SHEPHERDESS (*trying to free herself*): Why?

THE MERRY-ANDREW (*mysteriously*): 'Sh . . . my secret!

(*He steals a kiss and makes his escape. His voice can be heard far off*): Your ear?

(GENTZ *and his party follow the* MERRY-ANDREW, *much entertained. After a moment, enter the* DUKE *with* PROKESCH. PROKESCH *is in evening dress and domino. The* DUKE *is wrapped in a great violet coloured mantle. When it falls apart, one can see the white uniform he wears. He has white stockings and pumps. His mask is in his hand and from time to time he nervously fans himself with it. He leans on* PROKESCH, *who watches him anxiously. He looks weary, disheartened, a bitter line shows about his lips. One knows that the Eaglet trails bruised wings.*)

SCENE IV

The DUKE, PROKESCH

PROKESCH: Such languor, Prince, when all is laughter here?
Has Metternich . . . ?

(*The* DUKE *starts.*)

You wince at everything.

THE CHINESE GIRL (*passing again with the* BEAR *and commenting on a stone that he carries under his arm*):

What's that you carry?

THE BEAR: Why, my block-and-ring.

(*They walk away.*)

PROKESCH: The plot goes well, if I can read the signs.
Have I not had this morning these two lines (*he reads*):
"Bid him come early. Let him not forget
The uniform, the cloak of violet?"
'Tis for this evening, Prince. This note . . .

THE DUKE (*taking the note and crushing it in his hand*):

'Tis clear
Some lady kindly hopes to meet me here.
Well . . . I've obeyed her! Coming, I confess
For such adventures only.

PROKESCH: No!

THE DUKE: But yes.

PROKESCH: But then the plot . . .

THE DUKE: Oh, it would be a crime
To place, my country! simple and sublime!
Upon thy small, superb imperial chair
A thing foredoomed to shadows and despair!
Ah, if, when on that hallowed spot I stand,
The Past should stretch a clutching, yellow hand,
With horrid talons claw my spirit bare
And find a Philip or a Rudolph there!
I tremble lest the hum of golden bees
Should wake in me a monster such as these.

PROKESCH (*laughing*): Monseigneur, this is madness.

THE DUKE (*trembling and with a look of anguish that makes* PROKESCH *recoil*):

Am I mad?

PROKESCH (*understanding the* DUKE'S *agony*):

Merciful heavens!

THE DUKE: All my race has had,
If in Bohemia or in far Castille,
Its vein of madness. Come! for woe or weal,
I'll choose my form, my mania! I rejoice
My kinsman left to me such range of choice,
A very madman's catalogue, indeed.
Astrologer, musician, hawker. Read.
Mumbler of prayers? Or conjurer? Which one?
PROKESCH: I see too well what Metternich has done!
(*Lowering his voice*):
The luckless Hapsburgs—he has called the roll?
THE DUKE: Too gloomily they choose, upon my soul!
But mingled perfumes make a fresh perfume.
My brain, inhaling all that cloud of doom,
Distills gay fancies from their melancholy.
A very fool may make his choice of folly.
Aha! . . . The taste I struggled to remove!
I've found my mania! I'll be mad for love!
I will love,—love . . .
(*With clenched fist he strikes his lips*):
And ask but this of fate
That kisses crush this Austrian mouth I hate.
PROKESCH: Monseigneur!
THE DUKE: On reflection, I have done
A fitting thing,—Don Juan, Napoleon's son!
The self-same soul, always unsatisfied,
The same desire that for fresh conquest tried.
O blood magnificent, polluted so,
Thou wouldst breed Cæsars, but thy weakened flow,
Its energy not being wholly dead,
Failing the Cæsars, spawns Don Juan instead!
Why that's a form of being conqueror!
I know a fever, all unknown before.
Fatal, says Byron, its devouring thrill.—
It is a way to be my father still.
Bah! Which is better,—who has skill to prove?—

To win a world or win a moment's love?
So be it! Thus the Legend's end be sung—
A conquering lover from the Conqueror sprung.
So be it; blonde image of the hero brown,
Who, one by one, battered walled cities down,
Do thou lay siege to hearts, stormed one by one,
And walk in moonlight where he faced the sun!

PROKESCH: Ah, hush, my Prince. The jest is far too wry!

THE DUKE: Oh, well I know that ghostly voices cry,
Voices of spectres clad in tattered blue,
"What means the imperial epopee to you? . . .
Our toil, and courage; . . . and the glory shed
On blood-stained snow, . . . and on so many dead!
The countless fields, the countless triumphs there,
What mean they, boy?" "A tale to please the fair."
Charming, while watching coaches block the course,
Lightly to spring upon a costly horse
And name him Jena! And a youth, mayhap,
Finds Austerlitz a feather in his cap!

PROKESCH: You would not have the heart to wear it so!

THE DUKE: Surely, my friend. Some day, perhaps, I'll show,
—For ladies love a sentiment like that,—
A tiny eagle pinning my cravat.
(*The orchestra which has been mute begins again*)
Music . . . And, Cæsar's son, you have no part
Save as Don Juan of Mozart.
(*He laughs bitterly*)
Of Mozart?
Rather of Strauss!
(*He salutes* PROKESCH *gravely.*)
I'll dance, and, bound to please,
Be charming, useless, wholly Viennese.
(*He is about to go away, when his attention is arrested by the appearance of the* ARCHDUCHESS.)
My aunt . . . let's see . . .

PROKESCH (*terrified by the wild light in his eyes*): Ah, no!

THE DUKE (*from the corner of his twisting lips*): I mean to see.

(*Repelling* PROKESCH, *who goes sorrowfully away, he approaches the* ARCHDUCHESS. *She wears a very simple costume: short skirt, basque, kerchief, apron, cap; finally, in prettily exact imitation of the famous picture by Liotard, she carries a small tray on which are a cup of chocolate and a glass of water.*)

SCENE V

The DUKE, *at first with the* ARCHDUCHESS, *later with* THERESE

THE DUKE (*languorously*):

How sweet the perfume of the linden tree.

THE ARCHDUCHESS: Look at my waiter. Is my part well played?

THE DUKE: You come disguised as . . . ?

THE ARCHDUCHESS: As the chocolate maid

Of Dresden.

THE DUKE: Ravishing. I'm sure your tray

Tires you.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*clinging to the tray with its glass and cup*):

Why, no.

THE DUKE (*who has seated himself on the bench, making a place beside him, with tender familiarity*):

Sit down. Ah, come away.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*sitting down, cheerfully*):

Franz, you love life a little?

THE DUKE: I, I swear,

Love being nephew to an aunt so fair.

THE ARCHDUCHESS: And I, being aunt to anyone so tall.

THE DUKE: Too pretty . . .

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*moving a little farther from him*):

And too big.

THE DUKE: To play at all.

THE ARCHDUCHESS: To play . . . what game?

THE DUKE: Friendship, that kinship mars.

THE ARCHDUCHESS: I do not like your eyes.

THE DUKE: But yours are stars.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*trying to jest*):

I understand. The court's in mask and so
The friend must wear the lover's domino.

THE DUKE (*drawing nearer*):

At first, just friendship, aunt with cousin's eyes.
Friendship's akin to love, declare the wise,
'Twixt aunt and nephew, sponsor and godchild,
—Ah smell the limes!—and must be reconciled;
And so, with colonel and with chocolate maid,
A border incident may well be played.

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*rising*): Our friendship's spoiled.

THE DUKE: I love the border land
Whose moods and mists we hardly understand,
Where all is mingled and confused.
(*He has seized her hand. She snatches it away.*)

THE ARCHDUCHESS: Take care!
(*She withdraws.*)

THE DUKE (*sulkily*): Oh, well! If you assume your duchess air!

THE ARCHDUCHESS:

Good-bye, Franz. You have hurt me very much.
(*She goes away, without a backward glance.*)

THE DUKE: Why, if still water's troubled at its touch,
If the drop fell in any stream less clear . . .
Wait,—who is coming?
(*He sees* THERESE OF LORGET, *who for a moment has been idly trailing in the stone basin of a fountain the tips of the long trailing grasses that hang from her shoulders.*)
Little one, you here?
You have not yet sought Parma's paradise?
(*He looks at* THERESE'S *disguise.*)
But . . . all these grasses! . . . What is this?

THERESE (*smiling*): One tries
To be . . . to come as . . .

THE DUKE (*understanding*): Ah!
(*sorrowfully*) On his lone rock

My father found, though gaolers jibe and mock,
A fountain for a friend. Ah, little one,
I have my Saint Helena at Schoenbrunn,
And my parched soul finds still this precious thing,
—I have my gaoler, but I have my Spring.

THERESE: Yet, sir, you shun that little cooling rill.

THE DUKE: I sought to flee my rock. It holds me still.
The dream is over.

THERESE: What?

THE DUKE: Regrets, begone!
Die, dreams!

THERESE (*very softly, drawing nearer*): You suffer.

THE DUKE: Give, O pitying one,
Its freshness and its healing.

THERESE: If it cures
One hurt . . .

THE DUKE (*slowly*): But if I trouble it?

THERESE (*raising her eyes to his*): Sir, it is yours.

THE DUKE (*suddenly speaking in a hoarse, brutal voice*):
Then meet me at my hunting lodge. You know
The place, deep in the forest.

THERESE (*recoiling, frightened*): Meet you . . . so?

THE DUKE (*hurriedly*):
Ah, I can wait. Answer nor no, nor yes.

THERESE (*utterly dismayed*): But . . .

THE DUKE: Think in mercy of my wretchedness.
My dream is dead. No single hope I keep,—
Nothing but tears. I seek a place to weep.

(*His bowed head is very close to the Little Spring, when footsteps make them start. It is* TIBURCE, *who passes with a lady on his arm. Seeing* THERESE, *he stops chattering small talk and casts a threatening glance in her direction. She looks at him disdainfully and goes out. The* DUKE *does not see* TIBURCE, *but, beckoning to a lackey, he takes a note book from his pocket, tears out a leaf, and scribbles a few words, holding the note book on his knee.*)

SCENE VI

The DUKE, *a* LACKEY; *later,* FANNY ELSSLER *and the* FRENCH ENVOY

THE DUKE (*handing the* LACKEY *the note he has just written*):
—My household at the palace. Bid them know
I'm sleeping at the lodge. Let someone go
And make all ready. With all haste, be there.

THE LACKEY (*bowing*): That's all, sir?

THE DUKE: All. To-morrow, the gray mare.

(*The servant goes out.* FANNY ELSSLER, *still masked, runs past, turning her head to see if she is followed. She stops, seeing the* DUKE, *whose purple mantle permits a glimpse of the white uniform.*)

FANNY (*drawing near, recites mysteriously*):
. . . *White uniform . . . a cloak of . . .*

THE DUKE (*starting, and finishing the line* PROKESCH *has read to him*):
. . . *violet.*

(*Ironically, aside*):
A woman! So, Prokesch, I've won my bet.

FANNY (*showing the* DUKE *the* ENVOY, *who is following her*):
Wait till I drive this suitor from the field,
I will return.

THE DUKE (*smiling*): I wait.

(FANNY *runs lightly among the ruins, trying to evade her pursuer. The* DUKE *walks back and forth.*)

'Tis fate. I yield.
I will be lover,—fitting part for me,—
Lover . . .

(*He looks at a much engrossed couple who are coming toward the rustic bench.*)

Like those . . . like all the world . . .

(*Suddenly he trembles, and hastily flings himself behind an orange tree which hides him, for, in the couple which he has so disdainfully singled out, he recognizes* MARIE-LOUISE *and his Chamberlain,* BOMBELLES.)

SCENE VII

MARIE-LOUISE, BOMBELLES; *The* DUKE, *behind the orange tree*

BOMBELLES (*continuing a conversation*): Was he
So much in love?
MARIE-LOUISE: Why do you tease me so?
BOMBELLES: Was he?
THE DUKE (*in a choking voice*): My mother!
BOMBELLES: Was he?
MARIE-LOUISE: I don't know.
He was afraid of me. On all the earth
The thing he couldn't conquer was his birth.
He knew himself outranked. To seem at ease
He'd call me, from his throne, "My good Louise." . . .
Eh . . . yes . . . he had some taste . . . perhaps you'd call
It sentiment . . . I am a woman, after all.
BOMBELLES: Aye, before all.
MARIE-LOUISE: It is my right.
(*In a mocking tone she goes on*): One day
He raged at something I just chanced to say.
Saint Aulaire brought to Blois disastrous news.
I lay in bed. My feet always refuse
To stay beneath the covers, and that day
They did look rather pretty, I must say,—
Like those Thomire has chiselled, just as white.
Well, Saint Aulaire did not despise that sight.
I smiled and said "You're looking at my feet?"
And, though his country tottered, I repeat
He did look at them,—the dear Saint Aulaire.
Coquettish, was it? That's no crime, I swear.
Though politics in France went well or ill
A man might see my feet were pretty, still.
THE DUKE (*frozen to the spot, like a man in a nightmare*):
Oh! I must fly! I stay . . .
BOMBELLES (*leaning closer*): What have you here?
This gray flint in your bracelet?—something queer.
MARIE-LOUISE (*suddenly overcome with emotion*):

You mustn't jest at that. Ah, I forbid!
It is a fragment of . . .

BOMBELLES (*teasingly*): A pyramid?

MARIE-LOUISE: A fragment of the tomb . . . you'll weep, I know,—
Where Juliet sleeps beside her Romeo.
(*She sighs*) It makes me think . . .

BOMBELLES (*resentfully*): I think it's quite too bad
To drag in Neipperg.

MARIE-LOUISE: Neipperg makes you mad;
Then why speak of . . .

BOMBELLES (*with the emphasis of a man who prefers being the successful rival of Napoleon the First to that of Neipperg*): Why that is different.
(*With more curiosity than jealousy*):
You . . . did you love? . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*rather absent-mindedly*): Whom?

BOMBELLES: The . . . Other?

MARIE-LOUISE: Oh, you meant . . .

BOMBELLES: A man so great . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*pettishly*): Now who has ever proved
Being a genius made a man beloved?
Besides, don't talk of him. Let's talk of . . . us.
(*Coquettishly*) You'd like that?

BOMBELLES: Was he jealous?

MARIE-LOUISE: Well the fuss
He made, and nearly killed a tailor once, poor man!
Leroy had made a cloak, and he began
To praise my shoulders when he tried it on.
(*She lets the mantle that covers her gown slip off on the bench, and her white shoulders, glittering with gems, appear.*)

BOMBELLES (*flattered both as a lover and in his hatred as a royalist*): So, he *was* jealous? Then, Napoleon . . .

MARIE-LOUISE (*frightened and looking about her*): 'Sh!

BOMBELLES: Would not like *me* to praise them, nor to tell
Half of your loveliness . . . would not . . .
MARIE-LOUISE: Bombelles!
BOMBELLES (*tasting the sweets of vengeance against glory, without peril*): Have let me see that loveliness so near?
THE DUKE (*gripping the bole of the orange tree*):
Forgive me, Father, that I stay and hear!
BOMBELLES (*looking at the fashionable puffs and coils that surmount* MARIE-LOUISE'S *head like an Arlian cap*):
. . . Nor find your head-dress like a maid of Arles,
But prettier and blonder.
MARIE-LOUISE (*faintly*): Nonsense, Charles.
BOMBELLES (*suiting the action to the word*):
Nor would he like to see me, leaning so, . . .
(*But before his lips touch the white shoulder of* MARIE-LOUISE, *he is seized by the throat, and flung at the feet of the* DUKE OF REICHSTADT, who cries):
Ah, none of that! I will not have it!
(*He recoils, astonished by his own act; passes his hand over his brow, and suddenly*): Oh,
Thank God, thank God! I'm saved!
MARIE-LOUISE (*half fainting*): Franz!
THE DUKE: For that cry,—
That blow,—were not of me, for always I
Respect my Mother and her liberty!
It was . . . That Other . . . and he lives in me!
It was not I who laid that braggart low.
The Corsican leapt out and dealt the blow!
BOMBELLES (*who has staggered to his feet, taking a step toward the* DUKE): Sir . . .
THE DUKE: Not a word!
(BOMBELLES *stops, realizing that truly there is nothing to be said between them, and the* DUKE, *turning to his Mother, bows low.*)
Madame,
Return at once to Sala, whence you came,—

For has that palace not two equal wings,
One for mundane, and one, for holy things,
Chapel and theatre, where you may find
That golden mean to which you are inclined?
My best respects.

MARIE-LOUISE (*with trembling voice*): My son!

THE DUKE: All's as you will
It is your right to be just woman still.
Be woman still at Sala! In those halls,
Listen, ah, listen, to a voice that calls,
Glory's revenge for all forgetful deeds,
—Widow, who could not guard her widow's weeds,—
Listen: No eyes were lifted to your face
But sought the immortal glory they might trace;
Your very hair is only blonde and curled
Because Napoleon conquered all the world!

MARIE-LOUISE:
But . . . but . . . Come, come, Bombelles! We will not stay!

THE DUKE: Return to Sala. I am saved, I say!

MARIE-LOUISE (*going out, accompanied by* BOMBELLES, *at a little distance*): Good-bye, sir.

THE DUKE (*motionless, no longer regarding them*):
Hands, cold hands, so white, so still!
Sad hands that miss one golden circlet still!
Kind hands, caressing once a little one,
Hands wet with tears that he was not her son.
My orphaned soul leaps all the years between,—
Weeping, I kiss you, hands of Josephine!

MARIE-LOUISE (*hearing that name, and turning with feminine spite*): The Creole? At Malmaison, know that she . . .

THE DUKE (*in a terrible voice*): Silence!
(MARIE-LOUISE *shrinks back, frightened.*)
And if so vile a thing could be,
One reason more that I should keep the faith.

(MARIE-LOUISE *reaches the gateway at the right and leaves the ball, with* BOMBELLES. *And the* DUKE *stands transformed, erect, trembling with anger and with energy, saved, as he has said. He is no longer the creature of a few moments earlier, listless, fanciful and pale. He is again ardent and sorrowful. At this moment* METTERNICH *reappears, finishing his conversation with* SEDLINSKY.)

SCENE VIII

The DUKE, METTERNICH, *and* SEDLINSKY *for one moment; later,* FANNY ELSSLER

METTERNICH (*concluding, in a satisfied tone, to* SEDLINSKY):
I've put the little rebel's pride to death.
(*But he gives a cry of astonishment, seeing an erect young figure in his path, the prince whom, the night before, he had left, fallen before a mirror.*)
Hein? You here?
(*And as the prince, in leaping out to attack* BOMBELLES, *has dropped his violet cloak,* METTERNICH *adds, shocked at seeing the uniform of an Austrian colonel at this fancy ball.*)
In uniform? Were you not advised? . . .

THE DUKE: I thought that *everybody* came disguised.

SEDLINSKY (*aside to* METTERNICH):
The pride, so shattered by your Excellence
Keeps, though in fragments, all its insolence.

METTERNICH (*mastering his anger and trying to speak jestingly*):
The little colonel dreams, far from the ball,
Of what, pray?

THE DUKE: Of the little corporal.

METTERNICH (*nearly losing his self-control*): Oh, I . . .
(*Calming himself, to* SEDLINSKY):
A courier my attention claims.

(*He goes out, arm in arm with the prefect of police, saying between his teeth*):

All's to do over!

FANNY ELSSLER (*who has re-entered, a moment earlier, now advances eagerly, and whispers, very low, standing behind the* DUKE): Prince!

SCENE IX

The DUKE, FANNY ELSSLER; *passing* MASQUERADERS

THE DUKE (*turning, recognizes the masked woman for whom, a little while ago, he promised to wait; and with a violent revulsion of feeling*): I'm no squire of dames!
I will not . . .

FANNY (*teasingly, unmasking for a second*): Will not fly?

THE DUKE: Fanny! You here! I, fly? . . .
(*He comes nearer and lowers his voice.*)
When? How?

FANNY (*indicating with a glance the passing couples*):
Please play the gallant for these passers-by.
I'm serious. Listen well; but smile, bend low.
Your cousin's at the ball.

THE DUKE (*excited, but with a carefully gallant air*):
The Countess? No!

FANNY (*taking the* DUKE'S *hand, and putting it on his heart*):
I'm letter-perfect, as so long ago.
Your uniform's worn with her domino,
This one, that turns the Eaglet to a mew.
Your shadow, sir, was never more like you.
Her hair dyed gold that once was black as pitch;
Your mirror couldn't tell you which was which.
Now, while *Michel and Christine's* acted here,—
(*She indicates the little theatre on the left*)
You two change cloaks, and you, sir, disappear.

THE DUKE (*grasping the plan*): I mask . . .

FANNY: As if by magic, you are gone.

THE DUKE: Enter the false Duke.
FANNY: The false Duke comes on
To leave, observed by all.
(*She indicates the gateway at the left.*)
THE DUKE: And rids me so
Of all the spies that follow where I go.
FANNY: Returns to Schoenbrunn . . .
THE DUKE: Locks my door with care . . .
FANNY: Sleeps late to-morrow . . .
THE DUKE (*excitedly*): And I shall be . . . where?
Only . . .
FANNY: You see an "only?"
THE DUKE: This, Alas!
If any one, seeing the false Duke pass,
Should speak to her for me, what then, I pray?
FANNY: All's been rehearsed, sir, like a good ballet.
That she may safely pass,—you, safely fly,
Twelve dominoes in mauve will stand close by,
Circle about, behind, beside, before,
Coquetting till she passes through the door.
So, like a shuttlecock by players tossed,
She will be handled till the line is crossed.
A GROUP OF MASKERS (*passing in pursuit of one who wears a wolf's head*): Who is the wolf?
THE WOLF (*turning on his pursuers, and howling*): Hou? Hou?
(*He disappears in the woods.*)
THE GROUP (*turning its attention to a clown who passes*):
The fool is who?
THE JESTER (*waving his bauble*): Tzing!
FANNY: You go out . . .
THE DUKE: By Hietzing's gate?
FANNY: Not you.
THE DUKE: How then?
FANNY: People are passing. Careful. Here's the plan.
Kindly observe your humble servant's fan.
THE DUKE: Eh? What?

FANNY (*as she plies her fan coquettishly*):
I've drawn a plat there of the park.
You see the road, in red? It makes an arc.
You follow? . . . Statues are those little squares.
Green dots are trees. The guard, quite unawares,
Will let you take this road,—how well it serves,—
The left one, see? Close to the game preserves.
THE DUKE (*his eyes on the fan*): What are the arrows?
FANNY: There the road ascends.
Here it dips down; here, by the fountain bends.
Through this gate steps—the Emperor. That's the plan.
You see it plainly? Good! I close my fan!
THE DUKE (*with joyous fervor*): Emperor!
FANNY (*gaily*): The fairy coach shall bring him back,—
The long lost prince!
THE DUKE: What's at the gate?
FANNY: A hack.
THE DUKE: Hein?
FANNY: A cab, with two good horses, never fear.
THE DUKE: And then?
FANNY: The meeting place!
THE DUKE: Where? Far, or near?
FANNY: Two hours' hard riding and a place apart,—
The Countess would have Wagram.
THE DUKE (*smiling*): Bonaparte!
—Prokesch?
FANNY: I've told him. He is on his way.
THE DUKE: Flambeau? I'll have Flambeau?
FANNY: I cannot say.

(*While they talk, she leads him toward the left. At the foot of a huge antique urn, from which long sprays of ivy hang, a pile of rubbish is hidden in the grass. At the base of the urn, a cushion of moss offers an inviting seat, while close by a fragment of a bas-relief, lying flat on the grass like a large slab, the huge, bearded head of a broken statue opens its blank eyes and yawning mouth.*)

Let's wait here in the moonlight, and sit down,
You, on the slab and I on Neptune's crown.
(*Addressing the stone head, with a little playful curtsey*):
Is it permitted, Neptune?

THE HEAD OF NEPTUNE (*in a cavernous voice*):
As you please,

(FANNY *leaps back and the stone head adds in a hearty voice*):
But mind the ants, and don't expect no ease.

FANNY (*taking refuge in the* DUKE'S *arms*):
Good Lord! It answered!

THE DUKE (*remembering and understanding*):
Where the ivy clings,—
The hole, the cave . . .

THE VOICE (*drily*): And where the pismire stings.

THE DUKE (*trying to pull the rank grasses above the rubbish heap away*): Flambeau!

SCENE X

The DUKE, FANNY, FLAMBEAU, *invisible at first;* MASKERS *from time to time*

FLAMBEAU'S VOICE (*jovially*): A stowaway, like Robinson . . .

A BAND OF MASQUERADERS (*running across the scene, in pursuit of a Merry-Andrew*): Bravo!

FANNY (*leaning eagerly forward and putting her hand across* NEPTUNE'S *mouth*): Hush! Maskers!

THE MASKERS (*disappearing*): Droll! Good! Look! See there!
(*Their voices die away in the distance.*)

VOICE OF FLAMBEAU (*serenely, finishing*): Crusoe.

THE DUKE: What! Since last night?

FLAMBEAU: Why, yes. I smoked my pipe.

THE DUKE: In this hole?

FLAMBEAU: Yes. You made it by his type,
The lad that wore the bearskin first, you know;
His orderly was Friday,—old Crusoe.

THE DUKE (*stooping and examining the stones and the moss*):
I don't quite find the place.
FLAMBEAU: Here, on the right.
I'll blow a puff of smoke to show the site.
(*And through a chink in the great fallen slab one sees a smoke wreath rising on the quiet air.*)
FANNY (*showing it to the* DUKE): Vesuvius.
THE DUKE (*leaning far over, distressfully*): You suffered!
FLAMBEAU (*between puffs*): Camp *is* small,
But (*puff*)
I said (*puff*)
I was coming (*puff*)
to the ball.
FANNY (*looking anxiously around, lest they be seen*):
Talking to smoke wreaths, prince,—you *do* alarm me!
FLAMBEAU: Ouch!
THE DUKE: What is it?
FLAMBEAU: It's the whole damned army.
The ants. We've fought all day, dragoons, foot, horses.
I had tobacco; they, superior forces.
Ouch!
(*One can hear vigorous puffing.*)
I puffed fiercely.
FANNY (*laughing*): That's the cannonading.
FLAMBEAU (*whose voice sounds nearer*):
Might I just lift this stone?
THE DUKE (*looking carefully around and seeing no one*): Yes.
(*Then one side of the stone rises slowly, dragging with it long trembling sprays of vine and bits of grass, and from the damp shadow of Robinson's cave, emerges the head and shoulders of a mysterious and absurd* FLAMBEAU, *uniform stained, moustaches full of leaves and wisps, nose muddy, eyes gay.*)
FLAMBEAU (*as he lifts the stone, humming in a sepulchral voice the leading air of the last Opera success*):
None aiding . . .

FANNY *and* THE DUKE (*precipitately*): 'Sh!

FLAMBEAU (*resting his elbows on the mossy edge of the little cavern*): Ain't I like a figure on a tomb?

THE DUKE: Fanny has told me all. Flambeau, the time has come.

FLAMBEAU: Good! Metternich's the only boy to fear.

THE DUKE: He has left the ball.

FLAMBEAU: If Metternich ain't here,
Nobody knows me.

FANNY: Everything goes well.

FLAMBEAU: Metternich gone, and you two didn't tell?

THE DUKE: But . . .

FLAMBEAU: In the shadow of this here old urn,
You left me in that hole, too cramped to turn!

FANNY (*nervously*): Maskers!

(FLAMBEAU *dodges back into his cave. A crowd of masqueraders invade the place, circling round a magician with a huge white beard.*)

THE MASKERS (*trying to pierce the effectual disguise of the great beard*): It's Blacas! Sandor! Zichy! Let *me* guess,—
Thalberg! No, Thalberg is a dragon-fly! No! Yes!
It's Josika!

(*The magician suddenly stoops, dodges under the circling arms of the* MASKERS *and runs off.*)

ALL: He's gone. No, look! He stops!

(*They run after the magician, who leads them on.*)

FLAMBEAU (*raising the slab, like a Jack-in-the-box*):
Gone?

THE DUKE *and* FANNY: Gone.

FLAMBEAU: Then . . .

(*He coolly steps out of the cave, with gun and bearskin.*)

THE DUKE *and* FANNY: What!

FLAMBEAU (*putting the slab back in place*):
Why, then, the drawbridge drops.

THE DUKE: What will they say?

FANNY: You'll give yourself away!
Go back! You frighten me!

FLAMBEAU: What will they say?

(*The* MASKERS *reappear*):

ONE OF THEM (*seeing* FLAMBEAU, *admiringly*):

A soldier of the Empire! Perfect, eh?

FLAMBEAU (*to the* DUKE *and* FANNY):

Well, now you know, I reckon, what they'll say.

OTHER MASQUERADERS (*stopping at sight of* FLAMBEAU):

Bravo! Well done!

FLAMBEAU: That there's tranquillizing.

(*He puts on his bearskin and relights his pipe. In a moment the scene is overrun with hurrying groups. Everybody is hastening back from the ball, for the bell on the tiny theatre begins to ring and a footman hangs, among the leafy boughs that make the door, a placard on which one may read*):

Michel and Christine,—Play in One Act.
By Eugene Scribe and Henri Dupin.

(*Most of the masqueraders, before going into the theatre, stop to look at* FLAMBEAU.)

SCENE XI

The Same. Later, by twos and threes, most of the MASKERS; FOOTMEN; TIBURCE, THERESE, *and the Others*

A BUFFOON (*to a* LEANDER): You've seen the soldier?

THE LEANDER (*stricken with admiration*):

Well, he is surprising!

(*The* DUKE *has withdrawn a little, leaving* FANNY *with* FLAMBEAU, *who in a flash of time is the centre of an admiring group.*)

A HARLEQUIN (*examining him closely*):

Even to the ear-rings. That is artistry.

A DEVIL: And bushy eyebrows. Perfect as can be.

(*The little Devil stands on tiptoe and tries to touch them.* FLAMBEAU *draws back.*)

FLAMBEAU (*aside to* FANNY):
To get out with no wrap won't be no joke.
FANNY (*taking a ticket from her glove and slipping it into his hand*): That's Gentz's number. It's a lovely cloak.
A MARQUISE (*to* FLAMBEAU): Good evening, sergeant.
FLAMBEAU (*civilly*): Pleasure's mine.
A SCARAMOUCH (*observing him attentively*): You charm me.
Sergeant, where did you serve?
FLAMBEAU: In the Grand Army.
(*Laughter.*)
FLAMBEAU (*to himself*): I've seen 'em not so cheerful, in my day.
(*He marches up and down.*)
(*Exclamations from all sides, as they watch him march*):
A picture by Raffet . . . Charlet . . . Vernet.
A MASQUERADER (*costumed as a German Private*):
How well it's done,—powder, mud-stains and all.
There's not a costume like it at the ball.
Who were your tailors, sir?
FLAMBEAU: They weren't no misters.
This coat was made by *War and Victory, Sisters.*
THE GERMAN PRIVATE: Yes?
FLAMBEAU: You have a different seamstress?
THE SCARAMOUCH (*following him, as he marches back and forth*): Come, confess,—
You're Zichy.
(*Offering his hand.*) Dear Count, I have guessed you? Yes?
What, I am wrong? Not Count . . .
(*He recoils, when a cloud of smoke is puffed in his face.*)
FLAMBEAU (*apologetically*): That was a blow!
(*Laughter.*)
THE SCARAMOUCH (*to the others*):
His manners made to match his coat, you know.
FLAMBEAU (*singing*): *"A-going to Krasnoven,*
All droughty, starved and frozen." . . .
A FLORENTINE STUDENT (*coming and taking* FLAMBEAU *by the arm*): In Russia, hein? Oh, you are too complete!

Got your nose nipped?

(*Everybody laughs.*)

FLAMBEAU: But didn't get cold feet.

(*He takes up his song once more*):

"But fit for cheers was every throat
If we but spied his overcoat."

A HARLEQUIN (*taking his other arm*):

That coat to-day is in a sorry plight.

FLAMBEAU: It served to turn some hair, and livers, white.

(*The laughter is a little less spontaneous.*)

SEVERAL MASKERS (*without enthusiasm*): Ha, ha! That's good!

THE GERMAN PRIVATE (*stiffly*): . . . Natural. . . .

OTHERS: Quite exact.

THE HARLEQUIN (*aside, to the others*):

But don't you think he might display more tact?

(*They go off toward the theatre; the scene empties, little by little.* FANNY, *who has rejoined the* DUKE, *is watching carefully as the last of the masqueraders go toward the leafy door.*)

FANNY (*to the* DUKE):

Now, when the play begins, the coast is clear.

FLAMBEAU (*calling like a hawker to hasten the tardy ones*):

Come in!

FANNY: I'll go and find your cousin.

(*At this moment the lackey whom the* DUKE *sent to the palace with the note re-enters, and comes hurriedly up.*)

THE DUKE: Who is here?

FLAMBEAU (*calling*): Come in!

THE LACKEY: I have delivered your command,
Monseigneur, and your people understand.

(*He goes off.*)

FANNY: Hein?

THE DUKE (*hastily and in a low voice*):

I forgot. My household understood
I'd sleep at my pavillion in the wood.
The Countess must go there. How will she know?

FANNY: Stay, and I'll fetch her. You must tell her so.

FLAMBEAU (*on the threshold of the theatre*): Come in!

(*Among the last to come toward the theatre are* TIBURCE *and* THERESE.)

TIBURCE (*to his sister*): No? You are leaving?

THERESE: Yes.

TIBURCE (*bowing formally*): Well, as you please.

(*He enters the theatre. She goes toward the exit on the right.*)

THE DUKE (*seeing her*): Perhaps she means to keep the tryst.

(*He is about to warn her.*)

Therese!

(*She stops at the gateway, looking toward him. He checks himself.*)

No, no, let be. It makes my heart more light
To think she might so bend . . .
(*To* THERESE, *tenderly*) Dear, till to-night!
(*She goes out without a word.*)

SCENE XII

The DUKE, FLAMBEAU, FANNY, *The* COUNTESS

FANNY (*re-entering, to* FLAMBEAU):

Go see how far they've gotten in their parts.
It is the hour!

(FLAMBEAU *goes into the theatre.* FANNY *gives a signal, and one sees a youth, closely wrapped in a dark cloak, and masked.*)

FLAMBEAU (*coming out*): It's where the crying starts
Because some Pole has got a broken heart.

(*He returns to the theatre.*)

FANNY (*to the* DUKE): The Countess, sir.

(*The youth unmasks; it is the* COUNTESS CAMERATA. Her *hair, dyed yellow, is clipped like the* DUKE'S, *parted like his and has the same lock that falls low on the fore-*

head. Coming toward her cousin, she flings back her cloak and appears, white and slender, in a uniform like his own.)

THE DUKE: I see my counterpart!
I and my shadow meet. The two are one.
(FANNY *keeps watch.*)
THE COUNTESS: Hail, Napoleon!
THE DUKE: Hail, Napoleone!
THE COUNTESS: Are you afraid? I'm not.
THE DUKE: I dread, 'tis true,
The danger that you dare for me.
THE COUNTESS (*eagerly*): Not *you.*
THE DUKE: Ah?
THE COUNTESS: The name, the glory,—that my blood be king!
THE DUKE (*smiling*):
Sweet Amazon, you make your cuirass ring!
THE COUNTESS (*proudly*):
Were it for love, it would not be so fine.
THE DUKE (*coming nearer*):
You speak of . . . love. If to this lodge of mine
Where you will go, . . . some one . . . should come to-night . . .
THE COUNTESS (*trembling*):
I knew, I knew that I had guessed aright!
THE DUKE: Tell her of my escape. And, should she keep . . .
FLAMBEAU (*reappearing at the threshold of the little theatre*):
The old man's quiet.
FANNY: Good.
FLAMBEAU (*disappearing into the theatre*): He doesn't cheep.
THE DUKE (*finishing*):
. . . The tryst, tell me, some day. Ah, let me prove . . .
THE COUNTESS: To-morrow, Empire,—and you dream of love!
THE DUKE: To-morrow, Emperor, alone, apart,
And so, to-night, I crave one loving heart.
THE COUNTESS (*harshly*): You will have other loves!

THE DUKE: But none to trust.
This tender spirit raised me from the dust.
Willing to stoop to share my agony,
She comes to keep this stainless tryst with me.
THE COUNTESS (*with a shrug*): You will love again.
THE DUKE: Perhaps. In other days
I may await some woman fair of face.
—Never with yearning arms, soul-hunger deep,
As for this tryst I may not, must not, keep.
THE COUNTESS (*scornfully*):
I find your Highness very much aflame.
THE DUKE: Less than the day you whisper, "Yes, she came!"
FLAMBEAU (*reappearing*):
Hurry! The hero's rolling up his eyes.
He's singing to his colonel solemnwise.
(*The* DUKE *and the* COUNTESS *mask rapidly.*)
THE COUNTESS (*throwing off her dark cloak, while the* DUKE *discards his violet mantle*): Quick! Let us change!
FLAMBEAU: No fear! I'm in command.
'Tention!
(*He takes the ramrod from his gun.*)
I'll use my ramrod for a wand.
THE COUNTESS (*to* FLAMBEAU):
Your wand may make a Cæsar, ere 'tis done.
FLAMBEAU: Because this wand's the ramrod of a gun!
(*The* DUKE OF REICHSTADT *is on the right; the* COUNTESS *on the left. Simultaneously, they throw off their cloaks. And for a moment in the moonlight there are two* DUKES OF REICHSTADT. *But the exchange is made; the* DUKE *wraps the dark cloak about him and draws up the hood. The* COUNTESS *throws the violet mantle carelessly over her shoulders, not quite concealing the white uniform; her bared head shows its yellow locks. And there is only one* DUKE OF REICHSTADT, *on the left.*)

SCENE XIII

The Same; all the MASQUERADERS

FLAMBEAU (*listening, his head on one side; there is a sound of applause, the rustle of an audience rising*):

They're coming out.

(*The* DUKE *walks away from the* COUNTESS. *There is a burst of gay music. The scene is flooded with light. From every side footmen appear, rolling before them little orange trees in boxes, their branches lit with a thousand flashing crystal lights. On every green tub two white planks have been fastened; through an opening in the lace cloths that cover them, the trunks of the little trees lift; on each of these charming little tables from which springs a brightly lighted tree, a sumptuous little service is laid. Crimson glass; crystal prisms; masses of flowers. The powdered footmen swiftly and silently place four chairs at each orange-tree table. They quickly transform the two orange trees already in place, and they become tables like the rest. Seeing this chief of* METTERNICH'S *surprises for the ball, the masqueraders exclaim delightedly. A long chain of dancers, led by the* ARCHDUCHESS *and the* FRENCH ENVOY, *weaves among the orange trees. There are shrieks of laughter, and ejaculations, among which one catches fragments like this*):

The orange grove! We're to have supper here!
You're stepping on my train! . . . My puff, my dear!
'Rah for the orange trees! . . . Come, join the dance.
Baron . . . Marquise . . . quick, quick . . . your only chance . . .
Attention! One! . . . At three, we separate. . . .
Two! Three!

(*The circle dissolves.*)

EVERYBODY (*hurrying to the pretty tables*): Bravo!

FANNY (*to the* DUKE, *indicating the* COUNTESS *who, standing at the left according to the arrangement, has been surrounded by Mauve Dominoes*):

They will see her through the gate.

THE MAUVE DOMINOES (*surrounding the false* DUKE *with cleverly acted coquetry*):
Prince! Duke! Monseigneur! Highness!
GENTZ (*passing, watches them with an old gallant's envious eyes*):
'Twould appear
The Duke's the whole ball.
MASQUERADERS (*calling to assemble their parties for supper*):
Sandor! Mina! Here!
THE COLUMBINE (*whom someone has called* MINA):
How did you know me?
THE MERRY-ANDREW: By your chain of jade.
THE SCARAMOUCH (*seating himself and looking up at the tree*):
For dessert, we can have an orangeade.
A MAUVE DOMINO (*sentimentally, to the false* DUKE): Prince!
THE BEAR (*who has taken off his head to read the menu*):
Smelts from the Danube; caviar from the Volga.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*passing to and fro, arranging the groups*):
Mimi of Meyendorff, sit here, with Olga.
(*Everybody is seated, except the* COUNTESS, *who, still standing at the left, philanders with the Mauve Dominoes. The* DUKE, *without taking his eyes from her, has seated himself at a table with* FANNY *and* FLAMBEAU. *Laughter. Soft, gay voices. The supper begins.*)
GENTZ (*rising, with a champagne glass in his hand*):
Ladies and Gentlemen:
MANY VOICES (*trying to secure silence*): 'Sh, 'sh!
THE DUKE (*seeing the* COUNTESS *take a step, at last*):
Now, she must pass,—
Ah, dreadful moment! Ah! . . .
GENTZ: I raise my glass
In honour of . . .
THE DUKE: She goes!
GENTZ: . . . *the absent one,*
Who left us when the ball was but begun,
He who planned all, the flowers, the play, the feast,
Toils at his desk till day breaks in the east.

(*Applause. The* COUNTESS *profits by the focussing of attention on* GENTZ *to make good progress toward the gateway. As she advances, imitating the* DUKE'S *air of abstraction, and without the least appearance of haste, a Mauve Domino rises from each table and accompanies her, flirtatiously or languishingly, until another Domino, rising from another place, with coquettish insistency, takes her place.*)

FANNY (*watching her, whispers to the* DUKE):
How well she imitates your careless air!

GENTZ (*in an oratorical voice, continuing*):
We shall not spare
To dedicate thy sparkling, O champagne,
To Metternich, Austrian Prince, Grandee of Spain,
Duke of Portella, Lord of Daruvar . . .

FANNY (*following the* COUNTESS *with her eyes*):
How calm she is! And all is safe thus far.

GENTZ: *Chevalier of St. Anne.*

THE DUKE (*low, to* FLAMBEAU, *whose hand he presses convulsively*): Gentz's speech seems planned
To help our cause.

GENTZ: . . . *Seraphs of Switzerland,*
The Golden Fleece, the Danish Elephant.

FLAMBEAU (*aside*): A few more names, old boy, is all we want.

GENTZ: *Hereditary Magnate, Curator of Art . . .*

THE DUKE (*feverishly, watching the* COUNTESS):
I am not so slow! She overplays her part!

GENTZ (*with mounting enthusiasm*): *Bailiff of Malta . . .*

THE DUKE (*more and more taxed, as the* COUNTESS *stops on the very gateway, with a Mauve Domino*):
Why does she wait?

GENTZ: *The great Cross, conferred . . .*
Of Falcon, Lion, Bear, and Charles the Third . . .
(*He stops, mopping his brow.*) Ouf!

GENTZ'S RIGHT-HAND NEIGHBOR (*to the lady on his left*):

He will surely faint. There, fan him, please!

(*The two fans wave with comic ardour.*)

GENTZ: *Member of many learned societies.*

(*General enthusiasm*): Hurrah!

(*Everybody is standing. Glasses clink. The* COUNTESS *has reached the gateway; her foot on the threshold, she pauses, laughing and talking, taking care not to betray herself by any appearance of haste. Bending, she kisses the hand of the last Mauve Domino in farewell.*)

FLAMBEAU (*in an undertone to the* DUKE, *who can no longer endure to watch*):

Now, while they wet their throats and clap their hands,
She's going, Prince, . . . she's gone! . . .

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*who for a moment has been watching the false* DUKE, *calls in a clear voice from her place*):

What? Going, Franz?

(*The* COUNTESS *trembles, and is forced to lean against the latticed wall to keep from falling.*)

THE DUKE (*very low*): All is lost.

FLAMBEAU: Thunder!

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*rising and going toward the false* DUKE):

Wait.

FANNY (*terrified*): Mercy! Wasn't she
Told of the plot?

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*very close to the* COUNTESS): Franz!

(*She lays her hand on the false* DUKE'S *arm*):

Dear Franz, you wounded me
But . . .

(*She shudders, seeing through the mask eyes that she does not know. She stops, gazes intently, then barely whispers*):

Ah!

THE DUKE (*whose eyes have followed every detail*): Lost!

THE ARCHDUCHESS (*starts back, hesitates*): But . . .

(*After a second, in her natural voice, she says clearly*):

To-morrow, as we planned . . .

THE COUNTESS (*who between fear, and the sudden revulsion, and gratitude, has lost her poise for a moment*):
Ah . . . Madame . . . how . . .
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*low and hurriedly*):
Quick! Bend and kiss my hand.
(*The* COUNTESS, *recovering herself, bends low, kisses the hand of the* ARCHDUCHESS precisely in the manner of the DUKE OF REICHSTADT, *and goes out.*)

SCENE XIV

The Same, without the COUNTESS

ONE OF THE GUESTS: The Duke is leaving?
TIBURCE (*shrugging his shoulders*):
Notice he still must ask.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*returning to her table, passes that of* FANNY, FLAMBEAU, *and the* DUKE.)
THE DUKE (*checking her, whispers in a voice full of emotion*):
You gave your hand. . . .
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*looking for a moment at this masked and hooded figure, holds out her hand, remarking*):
A very clever mask.
(*She regains her place. Everybody eats, laughs and talks.*)
GENTZ (*rising, a glass of champagne in his hand*): And now . . .
(*He is interrupted by laughter and protests.*)
SEVERAL VOICES: Again!
GENTZ: One word.
THE HARLEQUIN: Sit down and eat a peach.
GENTZ: And now, I would complete my little speech.
The Duke of Reichstadt being here, you see
I left one name out, voluntarily.
Metternich's greatest name I could not give.
The Duke is gone. I bid you cry, *Long live Bonaparte's Conqueror!*
EVERYBODY (*rising, with a sudden outburst of gratified hatred, gives the toast and voices cry*): Proudest title yet!

(*The* DUKE *starts. All the glasses are lifted high.* FLAMBEAU *coolly empties his into his gun barrel.*)

THE DUKE: What . . . ?

FLAMBEAU: She might go off! I've got to keep her wet!

(*Everybody sits down. The conversation becomes general. The various groups call from one orange tree to another.*)

THE SCARAMOUCH (*laughing*): Bonaparte!

THE LITTLE MARQUISE: Man of marble!

TIBURCE: I'd say, of stucco!

THE DUKE (*angrily*): Hein?

FLAMBEAU (*trying to calm him, lest he betray himself*):
Think of the Empire, Prince, and let 'em cuckoo.

THE MERRY-ANDREW (*scornfully*): Quite superficial!

FLAMBEAU (*in an undertone, and holding the* DUKE'S *hand*):
Steady!

TIBURCE: Oh, quite secondary,
But, seen in Egypt on a dromedary,
Why, then! . . .

THE BEAR: They say Gentz hits him off.

FLAMBEAU (*grinding his teeth*): Good Lord! Good Lord!

THE HARLEQUIN (*to* GENTZ): Do it.

(GENTZ *rises. The* DUKE *tries to rise.*)

FLAMBEAU (*restraining him*): Remember, you ain't here!
Now, not a word!

GENTZ (*pulling a lock down over his forehead*): The lock!
(*Frowning*) The eye!
(*Thrusting his hand into his waistcoat*): The hand! There!
(*Applause and laughter.*)

THE DUKE (*whose nervous fingers are tearing the lace of the table cloth*): Oh . . .

FLAMBEAU (*turning with a furious gesture toward* GENTZ, *but even the caricature of the beloved Commander so moves him, that he whispers in a changed voice*):
The dirty pup . . .
He mocks him . . . but he kind o' calls him up!

THE CROCODILE: He fell once from his horse,—yes, fell kerplash!
(*Laughter.*)
FLAMBEAU (*to the* DUKE):
The *ultras* started that,—they'd felt the crash!
THE PIERROT: A mediocre babbler!
FLAMBEAU (*with mock interest*): I declare!
THE DUKE: They must defame the eagle of the air,—
The centipede and the chameleon.
TIBURCE: You know his name was not Napoleon.
FLAMBEAU (*starting up*): Hein?
(*It is the* DUKE'S *turn to restrain him.*)
TIBURCE: That name was fashioned by a simple rule.
"Let's make a sounding name," said he.
FLAMBEAU (*aside*): You fool!
TIBURCE: A name that history would like to say,—
Three short, clear sounds, you see: so,—Na . . po . . le . .
Then a deep, heavy "on."
THE BEAR: Well now I wonder!
TIBURCE: Yes, Na . . . po . . . le . . ., the lightning; *on,* the thunder. (*Laughter.*)
A BUFFOON: What was his real name?
TIBURCE: Fit for his class. . . .
THE BUFFOON: What was it?
TIBURCE: Why, he was called Nicholas.
FLAMBEAU (*furiously, rising*): Hein? Nicholas!
EVERYBODY (*applauding the excellent acting*):
Bravo, the soldier!
GENTZ (*laughing, to* FLAMBEAU): Nicholas!
(*He offers a plate of cheese to* FLAMBEAU): Have a bite?
FLAMBEAU (*taking the plate*):
Eh, well, . . . but Nicholas knew how to fight!
A CLOWN (*with aristocratic distaste*):
Was ever such a court together met?
TIBURCE: One spoke of titles, Gotha, etiquette,
And not a soul could answer you, not one.

FLAMBEAU (*mildly*):
What of the general that they called Cambronne?
A WOMAN'S VOICE: In war, at least . . .
TIBURCE: . . . His bulletins abound.
THE MERRY-ANDREW: In safety, from a bit of rising ground.
(*Laughter.*)
FLAMBEAU (*ready to spring at his throat*): Name of . . .
THE DUKE (*restraining him*): 'Sh!
TIBURCE: A ball, shot from some kindly gun
Wounded him in the foot at Ratisbonne.
It made a touching picture large as life.
FLAMBEAU (*to the* DUKE, *in a voice hoarse with rage*):
Keep calm.
THE DUKE (*to* FLAMBEAU): But you . . .
FLAMBEAU (*who has clutched his table knife*):
Somebody take this knife!
(FANNY *takes it from him.*)
TIBURCE (*sipping his Johannisburg*): In short . . .
THE DUKE (*whose finger-nails are digging into* FLAMBEAU'S *clenched fist*):
If he says more . . . if this is not the worst . . .
FLAMBEAU (*beseechingly*): You'll bear it!
THE DUKE: I will lose an Empire first.
TIBURCE (*between sips of wine*):
In short this famous hero was . . .
FLAMBEAU (*seeing the* DUKE *about to hurl himself upon the speaker*): Stand by,
My boy!
TIBURCE: . . . A coward.
THE DUKE (*rising*): Oh, I . . .
A VOICE (*from the back*): Sir, you lie!
(*General confusion and tumult.*)
EVERYBODY (*talking at once*): Hein? What? Who was it?
What's that?
GENTZ (*seated*): Quite a stir.

FLAMBEAU: Somebody said it! And he saved us, sir!
TIBURCE: Who has so dared?
THE FRENCH ENVOY (*making his way through groups that try to intercept him*): It is I.
THE SCARAMOUCH (*to* TIBURCE): He is an aide
Of Marshal Maison.
TIBURCE: You were not afraid,—
Who represent the king?
GENTZ (*seated, finishing his bunch of grapes*): How droll it is!
THE ENVOY: I represent my country, sir, in this.
He insults France,—he does her grievous wrong
Defaming him whom she has loved so long.
TIBURCE: Bonaparty?
THE ENVOY: Say Bonaparte.
TIBURCE (*with a shrug*): Ah, well,
Bonaparte.
THE ENVOY: Say, The Emperor!
TIBURCE: Your cartel?
(*There is an interchange of cards.*)
THE ENVOY: I leave to-morrow. Let us meet at dawn.
(*He walks off and talks in a low voice to two friends.*)
(*Violins are once more heard in the distance and groups, whispering, begin to drift in the direction of the ball-pavillion.*)
FLAMBEAU (*during the general exodus has disappeared into the cloak room. He returns wearing a superb overcoat and says hurriedly to the* DUKE): Forward!
(*He opens the coat a little and points, proudly*):
Silk-lined, and me that's got it on!
TIBURCE (*who has reseated himself, nervously holds out his glass to a lackey*): Water?
THE LACKEY (*who is the one the* DUKE *has sent to the Palace, filling* TIBURCE'*s glass*): You hate the Corsican?
TIBURCE (*haughtily*): Hein?
THE LACKEY (*lowering his voice, cautiously*): Tenderer
Your sister for the son.

(TIBURCE starts violently.)
You'd find them, sir?

TIBURCE: Where? When?

THE LACKEY: To-night.

TIBURCE: Where?

THE LACKEY: I know, sir.

TIBURCE (*with a gesture bids him wait without*):
Wait, don't stir.

(*The* LACKEY *goes out.* TIBURCE *stands, gripping his Captain's rapier.*)

I'll relieve Austria!

(*Meanwhile the* DUKE, *before going out with* FLAMBEAU *who waits for him on the threshold of the gateway, has gone up to the* FRENCH ENVOY *who has finished his conversation with his seconds, and putting his hand on his shoulder, he says*): I thank you, sir.

THE ENVOY (*turning, surprised*): For what?

(*The* DUKE *raises his mask for a second. The* ENVOY *makes a movement of astonishment.*)

THE DUKE: 'Sh!

THE ENVOY (*in a very low tone*): The Duke!

THE DUKE: A plot.

THE ENVOY: Now, as I live!

THE DUKE: I have given my secret, all I have to give.
(*Low and hurriedly*): We meet at Wagram. Come!

THE ENVOY: I, do this thing?

THE DUKE: You are not with us?

THE ENVOY: Prince, I serve my king.

THE DUKE: No matter. It is part of me that goes
To-morrow where you meet my Father's foes!
(*He salutes and goes to join* FLAMBEAU.)—Later!

THE ENVOY (*following him*): You hope to gain me?

THE DUKE: I am sure.
My Father won his Philip of Segur.

THE ENVOY (*firmly*):
To-morrow I go home. There is no chance . . .

THE DUKE (*smiling*):
Then you shall be a Marshal of New France.
THE ENVOY: Sir, if my regiment must clash with you,
I'd give the order, Fire!
THE DUKE: Of course, that's true.
(*He offers his hand*):
At least we may shake hands before we fight.
(*The two young men take each the other's hand.*)
THE ENVOY (*with careful courtesy*):
I shall reach Paris by to-morrow night.
Any commission I will gladly do.
THE DUKE (*smiling*):
I will reach the . . . Empire . . . earlier than you.
THE ENVOY:
If to the . . . Kingdom . . . I am first to come . . . ?
THE DUKE: Salute for me the Column of Vendome.

(*He goes out. The curtain falls*)

ACT V

Broken Wings

A plain. A few bushes; a hillock where the grasses tremble always in the wind; a little cabin built of broken gun carriages and caissons, and set about with scraggly geraniums. A boundary post painted in the Austrian colours. And that is all. The field, the sky, the grass, the stars. A plain, a vast plain,—the Field of Wagram.

SCENE I

The Duke, Flambeau, Prokesch

(*All three, wrapped in their cloaks, wait motionless. Silence, save for the sighing of the wind.*)

The Duke (*opening his cloak with his breast toward the wind, and folding it again*):

The wind of Wagram, folded to my heart!
(*To* Flambeau, *who is watching the road to the left*):
Horses?

Flambeau: Not yet. We made an early start.

The Duke: On this first tryst that France and I have kept,
My longing, like a lover's, overleapt.
(*He begins to walk up and down. He stops, looking at the boundary post.*)
A guide post, black and yellow. My path lies
Henceforward all unstained by Austrian dyes.
Gleaming on white posts I shall see indeed,
"Road to St. Cloud." I shall no longer read.
(*He stands on a rock to decipher the name in the moonlight.*)
"Grosshofen."
(*Suddenly struck by a memory.*)
Stay. My regiment meets there,—
At Grosshofen, at daybreak.

FLAMBEAU: Well, I'll swear!
THE DUKE: I gave the order when I did not know. . . .
FLAMBEAU: We won't be there at daybreak. Let 'em go.
(*A man comes out of the little cabin, an old peasant with a long white beard. He has only one arm.*)
THE DUKE: Who's here?
FLAMBEAU: A friend. His hut's the meeting place.
He's an old soldier. It's his job to trace
The battlefield for tourists.
THE PEASANT (*seeing a group of people, automatically points and begins in a sing-song voice*): On your left . . .
FLAMBEAU (*advancing, smiles and salutes the old fellow; he lights his short French pipe by the long German pipe the old man carries*): I know this place!
PROKESCH (*to* FLAMBEAU, *in an undertone*):
Who bribed him, that he left
The Austrian service?
THE PEASANT (*who has overheard*): I was like to die,—
Right there, I lay. Napoleon passed by,
Napoleon the Great.
FLAMBEAU (*nodding*): It was his way,
After a battle, always.
THE PEASANT: He, I say,
Saw me . . . reined in his horse. And that great man
Watched while his doctor worked. . . .
FLAMBEAU: That was Ivan.
THE PEASANT: You say his son don't like Vienna? Well,
I'll help him leave there.
(*To* FLAMBEAU, *tapping his empty sleeve, with pride*):
'Saw it when it fell.
FLAMBEAU: No wonder you are proud. Not every one
Can lose an arm before Napoleon.
THE PEASANT (*with a gesture of resignation*): That's war.
(*The two old soldiers sit down on the bench by the cabin door and side by side they smoke, exchanging a word now and then.*)

THE PEASANT: They fight.
FLAMBEAU: And die.
THE PEASANT: *We* died, like dogs.
FLAMBEAU: We marched.
THE AUSTRIAN PEASANT: We, too.
FLAMBEAU: We shot, but into fogs.
THE AUSTRIAN PEASANT: We, too.
FLAMBEAU: A smoke-grimed officer would come in view
And tell us we had won.
THE AUSTRIAN PEASANT: They told us, too.
FLAMBEAU (*starting up, indignantly*): Hein? (*He shrugs his shoulders and smiles.*) Why, of course! (*Pressing the old man's hand.*)
If Someone heard . . .
THE DUKE (*motionless*): I hear.
THE PEASANT (*stolidly, looking at his flowers*):
They flourish, my geraniums.
FLAMBEAU (*shaking his head*): Never fear!
(*He points to the spot where the geraniums are growing.*)
Eleven drummer boys fell at that place.
THE DUKE (*coming nearer*): Eleven . . . boys . . . ?
FLAMBEAU: Always I see each face!
Eleven bullet heads,—as like as peas,
Under their shakos, marching or at ease.
Eleven lads, not knowing end or plan,
Just loving life and drumming, rat-a-plan.
They were the darlings of the sutler's wife.
We plagued 'em sometimes,—that's a soldier's life.
But when the little fellows beat the charge,
Looking like rabbits, only not so large,—
Twenty-two drum sticks and eleven drums,—
Our bayonets trembled,—as when thunder comes
And then the lightning splits the darkened air,
Our zigzag steels flashed to that music there.
Then came the brazen coughing of a gun,
(*With a faltering gesture.*)

And the bomb burst,—and killed them . . . every one.
(*He is silent for a moment reverently; then, in a lower voice*):
If you had seen the sutler's wife! My God!
She ran like mad across that bloody sod,
Her apron held like gleaners you have seen;—
It was their drum sticks she had come to glean.
(*He tries to steady his voice.*)
It makes you hoarse to talk of that . . .
(*He coughs to clear his voice.*)
Hum-hum!
(*He picks a geranium, and, with an effort at cheerfulness*)
To change a common red geranium
Into the Cross. . . . You see. . . . Three petals fell . . .
(*The two that remain make a tiny red butterfly, and he sticks it in the buttonhole of his greatcoat, saying*):
The Cross of Honour on my left lapel,—
The one you gave me, Highness, in that hour. . . .

THE DUKE (*sadly*): I gave in fancy . . .
FLAMBEAU: What I wear in flower.
(*For some moments, men in long cloaks have been coming in, gripping hands and forming groups.*)

SCENE II

The Same; MARMONT, *the* CONSPIRATORS

A SHADOW (*detaching himself from the group and coming toward The* DUKE *and* FLAMBEAU): *St. Helena.*
FLAMBEAU (*responding*): *Schoenbrunn.*
THE DUKE (*recognizing the newcomer*): Marmont!
MARMONT (*bowing low*): Fate fight for France!
THE DUKE: Those shadows . . . ?
MARMONT: Friends.
THE DUKE: Why do they not advance?
MARMONT: They fear to come unbidden, Highness,—for
None comes unbidden to his Emperor.

THE DUKE (*shivers, and after a pause*):
To-morrow, Emperor! Traitor, I pardon thee!
Twenty! And life begun.
God! it is good to be twenty,—good to be
The First Napoleon's son!

'Tis false! I am not weak! I never coughed!
Life lies before.
To-morrow, Emperor! Ah, but the night is soft!
VOICE OF A CONFEDERATE (*arriving*): *Schoenbrunn!*
ANOTHER VOICE (*replying*): *St. Helena!*
THE DUKE: The Emperor!
To-night my soul has grown so vast, so vast
To gather all my people I am fain!
My soul becomes Notre Dame! At last, at last . . .
A VOICE: *St. Helena!*
ANOTHER VOICE: *Schoenbrunn.*
THE DUKE: At last! To reign!
To reign! It is the glory in thy breath
That lifts, that bears me up.
Wagram, 'tis fit that I upon thy heath
Should drink my stirrup cup.

To reign, and so be servant of a Cause;
To serve the hour;
To reconstruct, bring peace, and noble laws,—
Prokesch, I love my power!

Those sad old kings heard never in their souls
This voice that rings in mine.
My eyes are wet,—hands heavy with the scrolls
Of pardons I shall sign.

O men who wrote the Legend with your blood,
Behold your Emperor's son
Pledges to you and France that lasting good
Your glorious courage won.

I was so often wronged, so much deceived,
I will keep faith with you.
O Freedom, even a prince may be believed
Who has been prisoner too!

To-morrow's wars are not for victory,
But in defense of right!
(I see a mother lifting up to me
Her child in all men's sight.)

And other names their splendour shall evince,
Great as Rovigo, or as Wagram here.
My Father wished to make Corneille a prince;—
Let me make Hugo peer!

I will do much . . . do all . . . I see the gleam!
(*He walks feverishly back and forth. Those near him withdraw respectfully.*)
Oh, I am twenty . . . I will reign . . . will be
By youth and ardor borne to all I dream!
My city waits for me.

Sun on her banners; ribbons, flowers and songs.
Sunshine and naught to hide.
The chestnut blossoms and the shouting throngs
As I, returning, ride.

This mighty Paris with her flower-wreathed guns
Proclaiming my advance!
Whom Paris loves, Ah, those thrice blessed ones
Have kissed the lips of France!

Paris, I hear thy bells!
A Voice: *St. Helena!*
Another Voice: *Schoenbrunn!*
The Duke: Resounding hoofs;

In the bright waters of the Seine afar
The Louvre's bending roofs!

And you who followed him so many years,
In snow and in simoon,
His soldiers! On my hands I feel your tears.
Paris!

A VOICE: *St. Helena!*

ANOTHER VOICE: *Schoenbrunn!*

FLAMBEAU (*to the* DUKE, *who is seized with a fit of trembling*): What ails you?

THE DUKE: Nothing.

PROKESCH (*taking his hand*): You burn!

THE DUKE: Aye, to the bone.
(*Aloud*) I'll cool off as I ride. That star has grown
As bright as spurs. This night has naught to hide.
Here are the horses! And we ride,—we ride!
(*The horses are brought up.* FLAMBEAU *takes the bridle of the one meant for the* DUKE, *and leads him up.*)

PROKESCH (*to* MARMONT, *indicating the conspirators*):
Why do these fellows crowd?

MARMONT: If they should stop,
He might not know they had come.

THE DUKE: A riding crop.

A CONSPIRATOR (*saluting, offers him one*):
The Viscount of Otrante.

THE DUKE (*recoiling a little*): Son of Fouché?

FLAMBEAU: All grudges are forgotten for to-day!
Long stirrup?

THE DUKE: Short.

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR (*saluting*): He, sir, who bows so low,—
Your cousin's agent, sire, am called Goubeau
(*He bows again*) Goubeau . . .

THE DUKE: Well . . . very well.

GOUBEAU (*still bowing*): Her agent, sire.

ANOTHER (*crowding in front of him*):

I represent King Joseph and I hire
All the supplies. I, sire, am Pionnet.

THE DUKE (*to* FLAMBEAU): Only the snaffle.

ANOTHER (*advancing and saluting*): Every fresh relay
'Tis I that posted. Ere the daylight's plain
You'll find the first. Morchain . . .
(*He salutes and tries to impress his name on the* EMPEROR.)

FLAMBEAU: All right, Machine.

THE CONSPIRATOR (*loudly*): Morchain.

ANOTHER: 'Twas I prepared the passports, thankless task.
(*He hands* FLAMBEAU *the passports, adding*):
Can anybody read such scrawls, I ask. (*He salutes.*)
Guibert.

ALL AT ONCE (*surrounding the* DUKE'S *mount*):
Goubeau . . . Pionnet . . . Morchain.

FLAMBEAU (*shoving them aside a bit*): We know your claim!

ONE OF THEM: Your father never yet forgot a name.
(*Seizing the stirrup to hold it for the* DUKE.)

A NEWCOMER (*forcing himself into the group and giving his name*): Borokowski. . . . It is I, let me inform
Your Highness, made the Countess' uniform.

THE DUKE: I will remember every name I have heard
And yonder friend the best, who speaks no word.
(*He points with his riding crop in the direction of a man, wrapped in a long cloak, who stands disdainfully apart.*)
Your name?
(*As he advances, the* DUKE *recognizes the* FRENCH ENVOY.)
You here?

THE ENVOY (*hurriedly*): Prince, not as partisan,
But as your friend. You know, as man to man,
That there must be . . .

FLAMBEAU: To horse! The whitening skies . . .

THE DUKE: I touch the mane to mount. The eaglet flies!
(*His foot is in the stirrup.*)

THE ENVOY: If I have followed you, I, who serve France,
It is to warn you of an evil chance.
THE DUKE: Warn me?
THE ENVOY: You are in peril.
THE DUKE (*half turning, his foot still in the stirrup*):
Peril? How?
THE ENVOY: You heard my challenge to Tiburce but now.
He left the ball without a sign or word.
I tried to overtake him, and I heard
A thing that sealed my lips. He met a man
Hid in the shadows and the two began
To plot your death. They knew the path you trod,
The meeting place.
THE DUKE (*with a cry of horror*):
The Countess! Oh my God!
THE ENVOY: I knew the meeting place,—you let me know,—
I came, I have warned you. I am done. I go.
THE DUKE: My hunting lodge! *That* is the meeting place,
They'll kill the Countess! Kill her, in my place!
We must go back.
A GENERAL OUTCRY: No!
A CONSPIRATOR: Why?
THE DUKE (*despairingly*): The Countess!
PROKESCH (*trying to restrain him*): Can
Make herself known.
THE DUKE: You do not know her, man!
At their vile hands she would die a score of deaths
If so, she knew, I'd gain as many breaths.
We must go back!
SEVERAL VOICES: No!
THE DUKE: We must go back! I swear
No man shall murder me and I not there!
D'ORANT: Our effort lost!
A CONSPIRATOR (*furious*): If we must re-conspire!
MARMONT: Your only chance!
ANOTHER: France!

ANOTHER: And your Empire, sire!

(*They crowd around him.*)

MARMONT: Forward!

THE DUKE (*sternly*): Back, I tell you!

PROKESCH: Only hear!
You will lose the crown that is to-night so near
If you go back!

THE DUKE: If I go forward, I will lose my soul!

MARMONT: One must make sacrifices.

THE DUKE: For what goal
May one betray a woman?

MARMONT: With success
Just in his grasp!

FLAMBEAU: The lad's a French prince,—yes!

THE VISCOUNT OF OTRANTE (*resolutely to the* DUKE):
Will you go forward?

THE DUKE: Back! And let me pass!

THE VISCOUNT (*to the others*):
He will not come. We will take him!

ALL (*rushing forward*): Yes! Yes! Yes!

THE DUKE (*raising his riding crop*): Give place,
Or here's a fitting weapon I shall wield
As once Murat upon a greater field.
To me! Prokesch! Flambeau!

A CONSPIRATOR: We will take him hence!

THE DUKE (*to the* FRENCH ENVOY):
And you, who rode so far in my defense!
The assassins who would slay my honour here,—
These are my murderers. These alone I fear!

THE ENVOY: Highness, go forward!

THE DUKE: You! Even you have tried . . . ?

THE ENVOY: I will protect the Countess. Ride, ah ride!

THE DUKE: You are not for us, yet you bid me go,—
You make it possible?

THE ENVOY: Not for you,—no
'Tis for the lady's sake.

THE DUKE: If all you say
Be true . . .
THE ENVOY (*to* PROKESCH):
Ride close beside him, you who know the way.
THE DUKE (*still hesitating*): I cannot . . .
SEVERAL VOICES: Yes, yes, yes!
MARMONT: 'Tis best. Lead on!
(*Galloping hoofs are heard.*)
ALL: Forward! We're off!
THE COUNTESS (*appearing, in the* DUKE'S *uniform, pale, dishevelled, breathless*): Unhappy! Not yet gone?

SCENE III

The Same; The COUNTESS

THE DUKE (*bewildered*):
You! But they told me . . . Can I flee?
THE COUNTESS (*raging*): Of course.
THE DUKE: A woman . . .
THE COUNTESS (*sneering*): Yes, a woman,—a great loss!
THE DUKE: But I . . .
THE COUNTESS: You should have left me to my fate.
THE DUKE: Their plot! . . .
Think . . .
THE COUNTESS: I think of the lost time.
THE DUKE: Your danger.
THE COUNTESS (*scornfully*): What?
What danger?
THE DUKE: Your alarms!
THE COUNTESS: Now, what alarms?
It was Flambeau who taught me use of arms!
THE DUKE: The man? . . .
THE COUNTESS: Away!
THE DUKE: What did you do?
THE COUNTESS: In fine,
He drew his sabre; well,—then I drew mine.

THE DUKE: You fought . . . for me?
THE COUNTESS: "Son of the Corsican,"
He growled, "I took you for a weaker man."
"Why, so," said I, "did he." My voice . . . a catch . . .
THE DUKE (*seeing blood on the hand of the* COUNTESS): You are wounded!
THE COUNTESS (*disdainfully, shaking off the blood*):
My fingers. Just a scratch.
My voice betrayed me. "A woman!" At the word,
"On guard," I cried. "I can't! The thing's absurd.
This woman is no Chevalier of Eon."
"On guard. This woman's a Napoleon!"
Feeling my blade touch his just at this point,
He fenced . . . I gave him . . .
FLAMBEAU: Thrust and counterpoint!
THE COUNTESS (*illustrating*): One . . . two . . .
FLAMBEAU: Surprised, I'll bet. Did he seek cover?
THE COUNTESS: 'Twas a surprise from which he'll not recover.
THE DUKE (*coming nearer*): And the young girl . . . My God!
THE COUNTESS (*shrugging her shoulders*): What does it matter?
THE DUKE: 'Sh! Did she come?
THE COUNTESS (*after a moment's hesitation*): Ah . . . no!
As if to shatter
The very oak, a fist banged at the door. Alone I go
To open.
THE DUKE: She did not come!
(*Then with a touch of bitterness*):
Ah, better, better so!
THE COUNTESS: Alas, the noise was heard. I lost my head;
If I were caught, all would be lost. I fled,
Groping my way. I heard somebody cry
"Fetch Sedlinsky." And then I found, close by,
Your saddled mare. I distanced all their calls.
I rode for life! . . . I am done! . . .
THE DUKE: Ah, God, she falls!
(PROKESCH *and* MARMONT *hold her up.*)

THE COUNTESS (*defiantly*):

I hoped at least, having so done my part,
To find some witness who had seen you start!

ONE OF THE CONSPIRATORS (*who has been on guard, watching the road, running up, to the* COUNTESS):

You are pursued. Quick! They are coming near!

THE DUKE: Quick! Hide her! Save her! In the cabin here!

THE COUNTESS (*as they carry her half fainting into the hut*):

Be off!

THE DUKE (*anxiously, to those who carry her*):

Is she much hurt?

THE COUNTESS: Be gone! Ah me,
Sir, if your Father were but here to see
This sickly lad who wavers, doubts and frets,
How you would make him shrug his epaulettes!

THE DUKE (*leaping into the saddle and gathering up the reins*):

Farewell!

SCENE IV

The Same; SEDLINSKY, OFFICERS OF POLICE

FLAMBEAU (*turning, and seeing the police officers, who enter on run*): We are caught.

(*In the twinkling of an eye, the little band is surrounded.*)

THE COUNTESS (*despairingly*): Too late!

SEDLINSKY (*advancing*): Yes, Monseigneur.

THE COUNTESS (*furiously, to the* DUKE):

Ah, visionary! dreamer! waverer!

SEDLINSKY (*who has turned to the one addressed by the* COUNTESS, *sees the* DUKE. *He starts back, crying*):

Your Highness . . .
(*He turns to the* COUNTESS): Your High . . .
(*He turns to the* DUKE): Your High . . .

FLAMBEAU: What's your trouble?

SEDLINSKY (*smiling and beginning to understand*): Aha!

FLAMBEAU: You have been dining, Captain; you see double.

SEDLINSKY: Aha, Aha!

(*With a quick glance, he makes a note of all who are present.*)

You please withdraw first, Prokesch.

(PROKESCH *goes out, after a farewell look to the* DUKE.)

FLAMBEAU (*sighing*):

We won't be crowned to-day by Uncle Fesch.

SEDLINSKY (*to the two police officers, indicating the* FRENCH ENVOY): Take this gentleman.

(*to the* ENVOY)

You in such a plot!

Your government shall know.

THE DUKE (*advancing*): Nay, he was not!

I swear it. And I will not have him made . . .

THE ENVOY: Pardon; I am, sir, since it is betrayed!

THE DUKE (*pressing his hand before he is led away*):

Then we shall meet again.

(*To* SEDLINSKY, *scornfully*): Be zealous,—spy.

SEDLINSKY (*to two other agents, indicating the* COUNTESS):

You, take the false prince home. Here, stand close by.

(*Two men step forward and roughly seize the* COUNTESS.)

THE DUKE (*in a tone that makes them fall back*):

With the respect due me!

THE COUNTESS (*trembling, at the sound of the imperious young voice*):

That tone,—fierce,—brief!

(*She throws herself into his arms, weeping*)

Unhappy child, you might have been a chief!

(*She goes out, followed by the two guards.*)

SEDLINSKY (*pretending not to see the rest of the Conspirators*):

As for the rest . . . we'll close our eyes. Oho!

(*The Conspirators whisper among themselves.*)

ONE OF THEM: I think . . .

ANOTHER (*gravely nodding his head*): To serve most truly . . .

A THIRD: We should go.

(*Without more ado, some of them disappear. Others go with more decent deliberation.* OTRANTE *takes* MARMONT'S

arm. They talk, with noble gestures. One catches the words):

Prudence . . . Later . . . What is well begun . . .

(*And nobody remains.*)

FLAMBEAU (*to* SEDLINSKY):

Open your eyes and count them. Here is one.

THE DUKE: Oh, fly! For me!

FLAMBEAU: For you?

(*After a second of hesitation, he is about to follow the others. But* SEDLINSKY, *to whom one of his agents speaks in a low voice, cries*): Halt!

(*Officers bar the way. Ten pistols cover him.* SEDLINSKY, *to the agent who whispered to him*): You are right.

THE AGENT: May be.

(*He takes from his pocket a paper which he hands to* SEDLINSKY, *saying*): Wanted in Paris . . .

SEDLINSKY (*scanning the paper by the dim light of a lantern held by the police agent*): He's described . . . let's see . . .

Nose, medium . . . brow, medium, . . . eye, medium . . .

FLAMBEAU (*jeeringly*): Whose medium?

SEDLINSKY (*pretending to read from the paper*):

Twice wounded in the back.

FLAMBEAU (*starting*): You lie!

SEDLINSKY (*smiling*): Caught! Come!

FLAMBEAU (*seeing that he has betrayed himself*):

I gave myself away! That's lux-u-ree!

Flowers on the guns, and bang! A farewell spree!

THE DUKE: Give him to France!

SEDLINSKY: I will.

THE DUKE: As criminal?

You have no right!

SEDLINSKY: We will take it.

THE DUKE: All's lost, all!

FLAMBEAU: Flambeau, your way was getting quite too set,—

So many sins and never penance yet!

SEDLINSKY (*consulting the document in his hand*):

He had not won the Cross. He has no right . . .

(*To an agent, indicating the red flower on* FLAMBEAU'S *coat*): Take off that crimson.

FLAMBEAU: Take it off! That's right!

(*With a geranium, instantly plucked, he makes his lapel bloom again*):

Why, I just grow them, same as you do hair!

SEDLINSKY: Take off his cloak.

(*The mantle* FLAMBEAU *carried away from the ball is torn from him and he appears in his grenadier's uniform.* SEDLINSKY *leaps back, exclaiming*): What?

FLAMBEAU: Me! Give you a scare?

THE DUKE (*in anguish*): What will they do?

FLAMBEAU (*coolly*): What did they do to Ney?

THE DUKE (*with a bitter cry*): Oh! No!

FLAMBEAU: A firing squad . . . Biff . . . bang . . . And march away!

THE DUKE (*with a moan of anguish*): Ah!

FLAMBEAU: I've laughed at guns and never lost a bet,
But these French guns! . . . Ah, none o' that, Lisette!
(*And his hand softly slips into his pocket.*)

THE DUKE (*running to* SEDLINSKY, *pleading wildly*):
You will not, will not free him?

SEDLINSKY: He must go.

FLAMBEAU: Seraphin, join the seraphs! Flame, Flambeau!

(*Unobserved, he has found and opened his knife. He seems to be tranquilly folding his arms on his breast; his right hand, in which the knife blade gleams, disappears under his left side, the arms are folded across his breast again. And he stands, still and very pale, arms crossed upon his breast.*)

SEDLINSKY: March. (*He prods* FLAMBEAU *in the side.*)

THE DUKE: What is it? He trembles!

A POLICE OFFICER (*roughly*): Staggers. Here, behave!

FLAMBEAU (*as with the back of his hand he sends the guard's hat flying twenty paces*):

The Duke is speaking! Take your hat off, knave!
(*With the gesture, he discloses a red stain above his heart.*)
THE DUKE: Flambeau! You have killed yourself!
FLAMBEAU: Why, that's no loss.
You see, I had to grow another Cross.
(*He falls.*)
THE DUKE (*flinging himself in front of him and intercepting* SEDLINSKY *and his agents who come to lift him*):
I will not let you stain him with your touch,
This good, clean soldier! Oh, it is too much!
Back, spies, and leave us! Back! Begone, I say!
FLAMBEAU (*in a choking voice*): Monseigneur!
SEDLINSKY (*indicating with a gesture to his agents the old Austrian veteran who creeps near, much shaken*):
Take this peasant wretch away!
(*And they separate the old soldiers, roughly leading the old Austrian off.*)
THE DUKE: I will await my regiment. At dawn
My standard shall salute him, and, led on
By mournful music, where it drooping stands,
(*He looks at* FLAMBEAU)
He shall be lifted by clean, soldier hands.
SEDLINSKY (*whispering to one of his agents*): The horses?
THE POLICE AGENT: Led away.
SEDLINSKY: Good. We can go
He can't escape.
(*Aloud, with an affectation of gentleness.*)
Your Highness, have it so!
THE DUKE (*violently*): Be gone!
SEDLINSKY (*falling back, but still speaking in a conciliatory tone*):
I understand. You are moved . . . Come, come.
THE DUKE (*thrusting him away with a gesture*): I bid you go!
SEDLINSKY (*trying to be soothing*): Pardon . . .
THE DUKE (*showing him the Field of Wagram*): I am at home!
(SEDLINSKY *and his agents disappear.*)

SCENE V

The DUKE, FLAMBEAU

FLAMBEAU (*raising himself on his elbow*):
It's droll, me dying on this very plain
Where I've already been among the slain,
First for the father,—this time for the son.
THE DUKE (*kneeling beside him, despairingly*):
It is for him, this thing that you have done!
I am not worthy! Not for me, not me!
FLAMBEAU (*beginning to wander*): For him?
THE DUKE (*eagerly*): Surely for him.
(*With a sudden inspiration*) For this is Wagram, see—
(*He repeats softly and earnestly*)
Wagram.
FLAMBEAU (*opening his bewildered eyes*): Wagram.
THE DUKE (*urgently, trying to bring back the past to this spirit at the gate of death*):
Do you see Wagram? Do you not recall
The plain, the hill, the clock tower far and tall?
FLAMBEAU: Yes.
THE DUKE: Do you not feel the earth beneath you rock,—
The battle ground,—and hear the battle shock?
FLAMBEAU (*opening his eyes*): The battle.
(*The dying eyes brighten.*)
THE DUKE: Hark! The charge. The roar, the crying . . .
FLAMBEAU (*gripping the joyful illusion*):
Yes . . . yes . . . It's Wagram, ain't it—where I'm dying?
THE DUKE: Do you see passing, dashing riderless,
That great bay charger? Surely, Flambeau, yes,
We are at Wagram.
(*He rises to his feet, and standing erect, he tells the progress of the battle to* FLAMBEAU, *lying on the grass.*)
Just before you fell
Davoust's division crumpled Neusiedel.
The Emperor with field glasses watches all.

You got a bayonet thrust. I saw you fall
And bore you to this slope, where we can share . . .

FLAMBEAU: Has the light horse gone in?

THE DUKE (*pointing to the distant blue mists on the horizon*):
The blue coats there,
With white trimmed shoulder straps, that come this way,
Those are sharp shooters.

FLAMBEAU (*with the ghost of a smile*): Under General Reille.

THE DUKE (*seeming to watch the battle*):
The left is breaking. Where is Oudinot? Where?
The Emperor should support the wing! . . .

FLAMBEAU (*winking*): A snare!

THE DUKE: The battle joins! MacDonald wheels in place.
Massena is wounded! See his ghastly face!

FLAMBEAU: If the Archduke extends his right, he's gone.

THE DUKE (*crying*): All, all goes well!

FLAMBEAU (*eagerly*): They charge?

THE DUKE (*with mounting excitement*): Ausperg comes on . . .
He is taken by the lancers at the hill!

FLAMBEAU (*trying to lift himself*):
The Emperor? What is he doing?

THE DUKE: Watching still.

FLAMBEAU (*raising himself on his elbow*):
Does the Archduke take the Little Fellow's snare?

THE DUKE: Watch yonder dust cloud! Nansouty is there.

FLAMBEAU: The Archduke's wing . . . tell me . . . has he begun . . .

THE DUKE: Down there, the smoke-cloud,—that is Lauriston.

FLAMBEAU (*gasping*):
The Archduke . . . you can see him on the plain . . .

THE DUKE: The Archduke extends his right!

FLAMBEAU: Why, caught again!
(*He falls back.*)

THE DUKE (*mad with enthusiasm*): Guns at the gallop!

FLAMBEAU (*struggling*):
I am choking! Water! . . . Can . . . you . . . see
The . . . Emperor?

THE DUKE: He moves his hand.
FLAMBEAU (*closing his eyes, peacefully*): A victory!
(*Silence.*)
THE DUKE: Flambeau!
(*Silence. Then the death rattle. The* DUKE *looks about him in terror. He sees himself alone on the vast plain with the dying man. He trembles, and takes a step.*)
That soldier lying there makes me afraid.
. . . How shall one be astonished or dismayed
To find upon this grass that sleeping form? . . .
—This grass, that knows so well that uniform?
(*He leans over* FLAMBEAU, *calling to him*):
Yes, Victory! On the guns, the tossing shakos!
FLAMBEAU (*in the death agony*): Water!
VOICES (*on the wind*): *Water . . . Water!*
THE DUKE (*trembling*): Hark! The echoes!
A VOICE (*very far away*): *Water!*
THE DUKE (*wiping the sweat from his brow*): God!
FLAMBEAU (*in a raucous voice*): I am dying . . .
VOICES (*from all the Plain*): *Dying . . . dying.*
THE DUKE (*aghast*): Death rattles everywhere!
A VOICE: *I die.*
THE DUKE: The endless crying!
I understand at last! This man who died
Gave the death rattle and the Plain replied.
As to a verse of some remembered song!
The man is still. The fields the sound prolong!
THE PLAIN (*far off*): *Ah . . . Ah!*
THE DUKE: Death rattles, moans, shrieks make the firm earth shake.
Wagram remembers! Wagram is awake!
THE PLAIN: *Ah . . .*
THE DUKE (*looking fixedly at* FLAMBEAU, *who is motionless*):
He does not stir . . .
(*Terrified.*) I must away . . . away!
He might have fallen in battle here to-day.

(*His eyes fixed on* FLAMBEAU, *he moves back, murmuring*):
It must have been like that . . . like that. All true,
The uniform . . . the blood.
(*He begins to run, but stops suddenly, as if a dead soldier lay in front of him*): Another!
(*He runs in the other direction, but starts back, crying*):
Ah, here, too!
(*A third time, he is arrested in his flight.*)
Here. . . .
(*He looks all about him.*)
Still the same blue shapes . . . all splotched with red . . .
The dead. . . .
(*Still retreating as if from a mounting and advancing wave; he has fled to the summit of the hill and all the Plain lies before him.*)
The dying. . . . Miles and miles of dead!

ALL THE PLAIN: *I am dying . . . dying . . . dying.*

THE DUKE: Lo, he raves
Who thinks earth's furrows are unmoving waves!
They murmur like a tide . . . of red . . . of red . . .
And this strange sea this night gives up its dead!

THE EARTH: *Ah!*
(*A murmur of indistinguishable voices grows, and it comes nearer through the mysterious stirring of the grass.*)

THE DUKE: What is this Voice that like a great bell clangs?

A VOICE (*in the tall grass*): *My head bleeds . . .*

ANOTHER VOICE: *My leg is crushed . . .*

ANOTHER: *My right arm hangs.*

ANOTHER (*heavily*): *My chest . . . caved in . . .*

THE DUKE: The battle ground,—
I willed it. Here it is!
(*The Voices grow clearer: One hears a sinister rumble, groans, death rattles, curses.*)

A VOICE: *Oh, wet my wound!*

ANOTHER: *Where am I hurt? The dust, the pain, the stench.*

ANOTHER: *Help me! Don't let me perish in this trench!*

THE DUKE: Not trees, but mangled limbs, spring from this ground! (*He tries to move.*)
Not grass, but shoulder straps, are sown around!
A CRY (*on the right*): *Oh, help!*
THE DUKE (*quivering*):
That was a cartridge belt I stumbled on!
(*He turns to the left, stepping as if stepping over fallen objects.*)
A VOICE (*at the left*): *Dragoon, give me your hand.*
ANOTHER VOICE (*answering*): *My hands are gone.*
THE DUKE (*madly*): Whither shall I fly?
A DYING VOICE (*very close to him*): *Water!*
A CRY FROM FAR AWAY: *The crows!*
THE DUKE: O monstrous fable!
O wooden soldiers on a wooden table!
THE SHADOWS, THE WIND, THE UNDERBRUSH: *Oh!*
THE DUKE (*desperately*):
O ghosts with gaping wounds, O spectres gory,
At least your anguish paid its weight of glory!
You bear the names your country must recall.
(*To one whom he seems to see.*)
You are called . . . ?
A VOICE: *Peter.*
THE DUKE (*to another spectre*): You?
A VOICE: *Just John.*
THE DUKE: You?
A THIRD VOICE: *Paul.*
THE DUKE (*feverishly, to still another*): And you?
A VOICE: *John.*
THE DUKE: You?
ANOTHER VOICE: *Just Paul.*
THE DUKE: You, whose feet are blown
To bleeding fragments?
A VOICE: *Peter.*
THE DUKE (*weeping*): Ah, unknown, unknown!
Poor names that history troubles not to know!

A Moan (*behind him*): *Lift my head on my knapsack.*
A Dying Voice: *Water!*
The Battlefield (*with a million death rattles*): *Oh! . . .*
A Tumult of Voices: *Oh, flying hoofs above me! Iron blows! I am dying. . . . Dying. . . . Help!*
Cries from Afar: *The crows! The crows!*
A Voice (*rattling and dreadful*):
Out of the deep I cry. Lord, hear my prayer!
Cries from Afar: *The crows! The crows!*
The Duke: Where are the eagles? Where?
Two Voices on the Wind: *Water. Rivers of blood! I thirst. The clamor.*
Cries from All Sides: *I die! I suffer!*
A Coarse Old Voice: *Hell and damnation!*
A Very Young Voice: *Mamma!*
The Duke (*motionless, frozen, a trickle of blood on his lips*):
Ah!
A Groan along the Highway: *Kill me . . . for God's sake. . . . Ai . . . that wound is deep!*
The Duke: I know . . . I know now . . . why I could not sleep!
A Death Rattle in the Grass:
The light horse are the dirtiest killers yet.
The Duke: And why so often I am bathed in sweat!
A Cry from a Clump of Bushes:
Tear off my leg. It's trampled in the mud.
The Duke: And whose it is when I must still spit blood!
All the Plain (*moaning*): *Ah . . . Ah!*
(*In the pallor that precedes the dawn, with the rumbling of a distant storm, under low, black, scudding clouds, everything wears a sinister aspect; plumes seem to wave in the grain; tufts of grass make fantastic military caps; a gust of wind makes the bushes sway and writhe as if in agony.*)
The Duke: And all the arms,—the bloody arms, I see,
And all the mangled stumps outstretched to me!
O monstrous harvest that the dawn winds place
To hem me in and curse me!

(*Flinging out his arms, imploringly.*)
Pray you, grace!
Grace, grenadier! Have I not paid enough?
—Awful charred gloves held to a bleeding cuff!
O young, young soldier, with your ashen face,
Forgive me, O forgive me! Pray you, grace!
You stare upon me with your awful eyes,
Silently crowding close for some emprise . . .
God! You would shout together in your death!
Why do you draw, together, one huge breath?
O tortured lips that strive to speak once more,
What would you cry?

ALL THE VOICES: *Long live the Emperor!*

THE DUKE (*falling upon his knees*):
Ah, yes! Forgiven for the matchless glory!
(*He speaks very softly, to the Plain.*)
I thank you.
(*And rising.*)
But I know. I am offertory.
All was not paid. But I complete the price.
I had to find this field of sacrifice.
This last, last service only I could render!
I, growing whiter, weaker, still more slender,
Seeking and pleading, trusting naught that proffered,
I grew tall, to reach up,—white, to be offered!
Now here, between the battlefield and sky,
With all my soul, and all my body, I
Lift up myself, subduing every sense,
Wrapped in the incense of this fog immense,—
All the Plain seems to lift, on high to hold me,
And heaven, appeased, bends gently, to enfold me.
I feel that it is very meet and right
The Plain should offer me, in Heaven sight;
That having made this final offertory,
It may more purely wear its robe of glory.
(*He stands erect on the little hill, a small figure on the huge*

Plain; he spreads wide his arms, in the form of a cross, to Heaven.)

O take me, Wagram, for thy tortured ones!
—One son, alas! Alas! for many sons!
Above thy mists, raised in thy crimsoned hands,
Wagram, all white a willing offering stands.
It must be so. I know it and I will.
Thy every groan my bosom, too, must thrill.
My soul has entered with thee in the cloud,—
And lo! my uniform is like a shroud!
(*He whispers as if Someone, alone, must hear.*)
Father, at so much anguish who can mock?
'Sh. . . . I add Schoenbrunn, meekly, to thy rock.
(*He is silent for a moment, and very still; his eyes are closed.*) It is done.
(*The dawn begins to brighten in the east. He says in a strong clear voice*):
But when the Eaglet learns to seek
A swan's death, innocent, and pure, and meek,
Nailed in the mists to some high-lifted gate,
Let him be ensign of this new estate,
To scare the crows and call the eagles home!
Immortal Field, let no more spectres come!
Let no more groaning shake the listening grass.
Cleansed are thy streams and cleansed the winds that pass!
O Plain, thou shalt not shake with mourning voices,
But triumph shouts and Glory that rejoices!
(*The world is golden. The wind sings.*)
My agony has put their woe to rout.
The groans are stilled. And Oh, I hear a shout!
(*Vague trumpets sound. A joyful murmur swells. The Voices that but now were groans and shrieks of agony, cheer the columns forward and give ardent orders.*)
Where on the grassy plain woe loomed so large,
Lo, phantom heroes lead a phantom charge!

VOICES (*far off*): *Forward!*

THE DUKE: At last, at last the glorious side!—
Dust in my eyes as charging soldiers ride!
THE VOICES: *Charge!*
(*Invisible drums sound the charge.*)
THE DUKE: Splendid laughter of the great huzzars!
EPIC LAUGHTER OF THE VOICES: *Ho! ho!*
Hundred-mouthed goddess of a thousand wars,
Sing in the distance, for I break the seal,—
Sing, splendid Victory!
VOICES (*from afar, while a dream Marseillaise rings*):
Form battalion! Wheel!
THE DUKE: Glory!
(*The sun is near the horizon. The clouds are purple and gold. The Heavens are like a Grand Army.*)
O God! The Army! God,—if I could fight!
THE VOICES: *Fire! Charge bayonets! Form! Column right!*
THE DUKE: . . . Fight in this tumult, as you led them then,
My Father!
(*In the noise of battle, which seems farther away, one hears, very far off, between drum beats, a Voice, metallic, commanding; as one having authority.*)
THE VOICE: SOLDIERS,—OFFICERS AND MEN!
THE DUKE (*madly, drawing his sabre*):
Ah, I will fight! Sing, fife! Wave, splendid flag!
Upon them! Charge! Take the white turncoat rag!
(*While the fanfare of the vision grows fainter in the distance and is lost, on the left, upon the wind that bears it away, from the right comes a strain of actual military music. Abrupt as the shifting of a dream is the contrast between the furious martial French music and a mild march from Schubert, Austrian and light, which comes with the rosy morning.*)
THE DUKE (*turns, trembling*):
What's that white column, looming near and large?
Austrian infantry!
(*Wildly, he rallies the phantom grenadiers.*)

Fix bayonets! Charge!
Upon the enemy! Oh, drive them! Drive!
Follow me, soldiers! Leave not one alive!
(*With uplifted sabre, he hurls himself upon the first rank of the Austrian regiment that appears on the highway.*)

AN OFFICER (*throwing himself from his horse and checking him*): Your regiment, my prince! What means this sight?

THE DUKE (*awakened to reality, with a grievous cry*): Mine!
(*He looks about him. The sun has risen. Everything looks normal once more. Of the Grand Army, only* FLAMBEAU *remains. The* DUKE *is in the midst of a vast plain, calm and smiling. White uniformed soldiers file before him. He sees, and accepts his fate. The arm that holds his sabre aloft falls to his side, hand on hip, sabre at the regulation angle, and, like an automaton, the* DUKE *in a mechanical voice, the voice of an Austrian officer, gives the orders*):
Halt! Front! Line! Column right!
(*The order, repeated by the officers along the line, echoes and re-echoes. And the curtain falls.*)

ACT VI

Folded Wings

A short time later. Schoenbrunn. The bed chamber of the Duke of Reichstadt, *sombre and sumptuous.*

At the back, the high door, black and gilded, which opens on the little Porcelain Salon. On the right, the window; at the left, a tapestried hanging which conceals a little door.

The furniture is just as it stands to-day, armchairs of wood and gilt; the screen, the prayer desk, tables and consoles.

The feverish disorder of a sick room. Trays, books, phials, cups, oranges, and everywhere, enormous bunches of violets.

A little to the left, a narrow camp bedstead. At the head of the bed, on a low table laden also with phials and flowers, a small bronze statue of Napoleon the First.

When the curtain rises, the Duke, *horribly wasted, his thin, white face rising above the soft folds of a white batiste stock, his hair long and curly, falling about his shoulders, sits, shivering, on the edge of the bed. He huddles in the folds of a huge mantle, that serves as bed gown beneath which his thin body is almost lost in the folds of his white linen, his hands are transparently thin, in the full, frilled sleeves. He gazes fixedly before him.*

Standing in a corner of the great room, the Doctor *and* General Hartmann, *an old officer detailed for service to the prince, talk in low voices.*

The door at the back is partly opened, letting a pale light filter in. The Archduchess *slips in very quietly, glancing behind her to assure herself that something is ready, and quickly and noiselessly closes the door. She is very pale among her laces. After having spoken a few whispered words to the two men, who nod assent, looking toward the* Duke, *she goes quietly up to him and takes his hand, very gently.*

He trembles, and recognizes her with surprise.

SCENE I

The DUKE, *the* ARCHDUCHESS, *the* DOCTOR, GENERAL HARTMANN

THE DUKE (*to the* ARCHDUCHESS):
You! But I thought you ill.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*with forced gaiety*): I *would* be ill
At the same time that you were. No, sit still! . . .
I am better. I got up and came to nurse
My nephew. How are you, tell me?
THE DUKE: I am worse,
Else you would not get up to see me.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Tease!
Is he good, Doctor?
THE DOCTOR: If your Highness please,
He takes his milk well.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Good!
THE DUKE: Hard, just the same,
To be—when one had burned for endless fame,
To shine with warriors, heroes of that ilk,—
Praised for the way in which one takes one's milk!
(*He seizes one of the bouquets of violets from the table near, and brushes it softly across his face, saying*):
Circlet that through my fever speaks of spring,
You hold her dew drops in your fairy ring.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*looking at the flowers that fill the room*):
So everyone sends flowers?
THE DUKE (*with a melancholy smile*): Already. Yes.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Tut!
(*She exchanges glances with the* DOCTOR, *who seems to encourage her and, after a second's hesitation, she begins in a constrained, embarrassed voice*):
To thank God, Franz,—because He deigned to bless
And make us convalescent, you and me, . . .
I want to have Communion . . . It would be
So sweet, I think . . . for both of us . . . Ah, why
Not take the Mass together, you and I?

THE DUKE (*after a long, searching look into her eyes*):
So that's what brought you here, devout coquette!
(*In a low tone*): It is the end.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*laughing*): I knew it! What of etiquette?
THE DUKE: Of etiquette?
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Why, yes. No Austrian Prince
When ill, can be deceived. You know it, since
The Imperial Family—you have often heard,—
Must help at the . . .
THE DUKE: At the . . . ?
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Not that sad word!
THE DUKE (*looking around*): It is true. We are alone.
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*showing the door by which she entered*):
I had them raise
An altar in your own salon,—the place
Whose threshold not a single soul can pass,—
We two, and just one priest to say the Mass.
You know court custom binds us very fast.
You see, this Sacrament is not . . .
THE DUKE: The last?
It is true.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: You see.
(*She gently offers him her arm.*)
You will come?
(*He rises to his feet, swaying. One hears the bell on the altar.*)
Hark! The first prayer is made.
(*The* DUKE *supported by the* ARCHDUCHESS *goes toward the door, which is opened by the* DOCTOR *and* GENERAL HARTMANN.)
THE DUKE: True . . . One must have of course their noble aid.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Only the priest and acolyte will share . . .
THE DUKE (*observing as he passes the* DOCTOR *and* GENERAL HARTMANN *who smile resolutely*):
Then . . . not to-day . . . not yet.
(*The door closes. The smiles are effaced.* GENERAL

HARTMANN *goes quickly and opens the little door in the tapestried wall, and all the Imperial Family enters silently.*)

GENERAL HARTMANN (*whispering to the Archdukes and Archduchesses*): Be seated there.

(*A finger on his lips, he motions them to take their places.*)

SCENE II

GENERAL HARTMANN, *the* DOCTOR, MARIE-LOUISE, *the* IMPERIAL FAMILY, METTERNICH; *later,* PROKESCH, *the* COUNTESS CAMERATA, THERESE OF LORGET

(*The Princes and Princesses, with a thousand precautions against making the least sound, place themselves in several ranks, turned toward the closed door, behind which one hears from time to time the altar bell.* MARIE-LOUISE *is in the front row. There are very old archdukes and archdukes who are mere babies; and half grown archdukes and archduchesses as blonde as the* DUKE. *In the shadows, one sees the gleam of uniforms.* METTERNICH, *in splendid regalia, stands with the last row of the Imperial Family.*)

GENERAL HARTMANN (*seeing that everybody is motionless, says in a low, impressive voice*):

When, with uplifted heart, closed eyes, bowed head,
The Duke shall kneel to take the Holy Bread . . .

A PRINCESS (*to a child who stirs*): 'Sh.

GENERAL HARTMANN: At that moment when no Christian soul
Would turn the eyes, fixed on their heavenly goal,
The door shall softly open, as we said.
Your Highnesses shall see the blonde, bowed head.
Silent and swiftly I shall close the door.
And when the Duke shall lift his brow once more,
He will not dream the Family has come
To help him take of the Viaticum.

(*At this moment,* PROKESCH *enters, at the left, bringing in*

two ladies, the COUNTESS CAMARATA, *and* THERESE OF LORGET.)

METTERNICH (*to the new arrivals*): Silence.

PROKESCH (*very low, to the* COUNTESS *and* THERESE):

They gave me leave to place you here,
Behind the Imperial Family, so near
The princes bound to him by destiny,
Whose folded hands and reverent heads you see,
—Pale children, puzzled by this act sublime,—
That you may see the Duke, this last, last time.

THERESE: Thank you, O thank you!

MARIE-LOUISE: Oh, if all go well
When the door opens! Hush!

A PRINCESS: The altar bell!

ANOTHER: The Elevation!

(*All the women kneel.*)

GENERAL HARTMANN: Softly!

THE COUNTESS (*who has remained standing, seeing* METTERNICH *with bowed head, standing beside her, touches his arm*): Even so,
Prince Metternich, you regret nothing?

METTERNICH (*turning, stares at her, then, proudly*): No.
I did my duty. I foresaw disaster, . . .
—Suffered, perhaps,—to serve my land and master,
And the old paths that I have firmly trod.

THE COUNTESS: You regret nothing?

METTERNICH (*after a moment of silence*): No.
(*Then, as the altar bell sounds once more*): *O Lamb of God!*

MARIE-LOUISE (*to the* GENERAL *who noiselessly opens the door a crack and peers through, watching*):
Don't let the door creak! Oh, let no one wince!

METTERNICH (*in a low, deep whisper*):
Nothing . . . but . . . Oh, he was a gallant prince!
And kneeling here, with all I know and feel,—
(*He bends his knee*)
Not only to the Lamb of God I kneel.

GENERAL HARTMANN (*his eye fixed on the crack in the door*):
The priest holds up the pyx. Low, low, they bow . . .
ALL (*knowing the moment draws near*): Oh!
GENERAL HARTMANN (*his hand on the door*): Absolute silence!
I will open . . .
ALL: Oh . . . !
GENERAL HARTMANN: Now!

(*Noiselessly the door swings on its hinges. And one sees the gay little room where all is porcelain; the blue and white walls, the crystal chandelier; bouquets of violets; the acolytes; the gold-tipped candles, the decked altar, and, kneeling, facing the little altar, two figures, the* DUKE *and the* ARCHDUCHESS, *who supports him with her arm passed around his shoulders. They are waiting as the priest approaches, the host already trembling above the pyx. A moment of profound emotion and perfect silence. All prostrate themselves, choking back their emotion and their tears.* THERESE OF LORGET *slowly raises her bowed head and moves so that she can see the* DUKE, *above the bowed heads of those in front, and a sob escapes her*):

THERESE: To see him thus! To see him thus!

(*A movement of horror.* GENERAL HARTMANN *hurriedly closes the door. Everyone rises.*)

THE GENERAL (*precipitately*): Quick! Go!
He will have heard! Be quick!

(*All hurry to the door on the left, but the door of the Porcelain Salon is thrown open and the* DUKE *appears on the threshold, sees the room full of people,—and after a long, long look, he says*):

Ah . . . Better so!

SCENE III

The Same. The DUKE, *the* ARCHDUCHESS; *little by little, the* IMPERIAL FAMILY *withdraws*

THE DUKE (*calm and with sudden majesty*):
First, let me thank the gentle heart that broke,

And broke the silence,—for the words she spoke
My blessing shall be hers with my last breath.
They had no right to rob me of my death.
(*To the* ARCHDUKES *and* ARCHDUCHESSES who withdraw *respectfully*):
Leave me, I pray, my Austrian family.
"My son is born a French prince. Let him be
A French prince unto death." Be it known
That I obey. Farewell.
(*The Austrian princes go out.*)

THE DUKE (*looking about him*): Whose were the tears?

THERESE (*who has remained, humbly kneeling in a corner*):
My own.

THE DUKE (*taking a step toward her, says very tenderly*):
You are so foolish! You wept bitterly,
Wetting the pages of a book, to see
Me live an Austrian. Now, you are crying
Because that's at an end, and I am dying.
(*The* ARCHDUCHESS *and the* COUNTESS *lead him to an armchair, into which he falls, exhausted.*)

THERESE (*rising and coming nearer, whispers shyly*):
The tryst . . .

THE DUKE: Ah, well?

THERESE: I came.

THE DUKE: You came! My dear!

THERESE: Yes.

THE DUKE (*mournfully*): Why?

THERESE: Because I love you.

THE DUKE (*to the* COUNTESS): You hear,—
And yet you hid it from me. Tell me why.

THE COUNTESS: Because I love you.

THE DUKE: Who, to see me die,
Brought you two here?
(*The* COUNTESS *and* THERESE *raise their eyes to the* ARCHDUCHESS.)

THE DUKE: You?

THE ARCHDUCHESS: Does it move you?
THE DUKE: Why this dear kindness?
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Oh, because I love you.
THE DUKE (*with a smile*):
As women love a child, this love you've told.
(*All three make a sign of protest.*)
Yes, yes.
(*To* THERESE) A child to pity,—
(*To the* ARCHDUCHESS) Spoil,—
(*To the* COUNTESS) Protect, and scold.
Your mother fingers think my brow is fair,
Seeking the curls that Lawrence painted there.
THE COUNTESS: No! We have seen your soul, and know its strife!
THE DUKE (*shaking his head*):
When History tells the story of my life,
No one will see my dreams, fierce, stormy wild; . . .
They will see a go-cart, and a solemn child,
A child not even crying for the moon,
Holding the globe—but as a toy balloon!
MARIE-LOUISE: Speak to me! I am here! Oh, take away
The weight of my remorse! What can I say?
I was too little, and your dream too great.
I have a bird's heart,—and I know too late!
To-day, 'tis stopped by my remorseful pain,—
The eternal hawk's-bell tinkling in my brain.
—Give me a little of this last, last tryst! . . .
My son, forgive me!
THE DUKE: Send me, pitying Christ,
The word profound and light,—choose Thou the one,—
Forgiveness to a mother from a son!
(*At this moment a lackey, who has entered noiselessly, comes to* MARIE-LOUISE. *She sees him and understands.*)
MARIE-LOUISE (*drying her tears, to the* DUKE):
Your cradle! Yesterday, you begged me for
Your cradle!

THE SERVANT: It is here.

(*The* DUKE *makes a sign that he wishes to see it. While the servant goes to fetch it, he sees* METTERNICH, *pale and immobile. He rises.*)

THE DUKE: Prince Chancellor,
My death is untimely. You might shed a tear.

METTERNICH: I . . .

THE DUKE (*proudly*):
I was your strength. My death you, only, fear.
Your will was Europe's law, because of me.
Yours was the power to set the Eaglet free.
To-morrow, they will listen, being sage,
And say, "I hear no stirring in the cage."

METTERNICH: Monseigneur . . .

(*The door opens and servants enter carrying the great vermilion cradle of the King of Rome.*)

THE DUKE: My cradle, crimson-lined,
That Paris gave me,—that Prudhon designed!
Baby, with pearly barriers girt around,
Christened with pomp, as though a king were crowned!
Set this grand cradle by the little bed
Whereon my Father slept, while Victory spread
Her wings above him, in this very place.
(*They set the cradle by the camp bed.*)
Close! Let its covers rub against the lace!
There! Let my cradle touch my dying bed.
(*He puts his hand between the cradle and the bed.*)
My life lies in that space.

THERESE (*sobbing and hiding her face on the shoulder of the* COUNTESS): Oh!

THE DUKE: And Fate has shed
In that dark, narrow space that holds my story,
No single ray of all that blaze of glory!
Lay me upon the cot.

(*The* DOCTOR *and* PROKESCH, *assisted by the* COUNTESS, *place him upon the camp bed.*)

PROKESCH (*to the* DOCTOR): Pale as the dead.

(*The* COUNTESS *has drawn from her bosom the broad ribbon of the Legion of Honour, and as she makes the* PRINCE *comfortable among his pillows, she pins it on his breast, unobserved by him.*)

(*The* DUKE *suddenly sees the red ribbon on his white linen, smiles, feels for the Cross, and lifts it to his lips.*)

THE DUKE (*looking at the cradle*):

My cradle found me greater than this bed.
Three nurses rocked me . . . three, who, rocking thus,
Lulled me with ballads old and marvellous.
Madame Marchand and her dear lullabies! . . .
Who will sing now, until I close my eyes?

MARIE-LOUISE (*kneeling by his side*):

Who but your mother, son, by any chance?

THE DUKE: And can you sing me, then, the songs of France?

MARIE-LOUISE: I . . . No . . . !

THE DUKE (*to* THERESE): Can you?

THERESE: Perhaps.

THE DUKE: Then, softly, sing
"It rains, O shepherdess. . . . "

(*She hums the air, very low.*)

THE DUKE: *"No more we'll go in spring."*

(*She hums the old air, softly, bravely.*)

THE DUKE: Sing *"On the bridge at Avignon,"* so I will rest
Lulled on the people's heart.

(*And now she murmurs the words of the old song he asks for.*)

THE DUKE: . . . Or . . . Oh, the very best.
I must remember that . . . I loved it so! . . .
Put me to sleep with that. . . . How does it go?

(*With a great effort, he raises himself on his pillows, and sings*): *"There was a Little Fellow,*
All uniformed in gray!"

(*His hand touches the little statue of the* EMPEROR *and he falls back.*)

THERESE: Fall, eighteen thirty with eighteen eleven!
THE ARCHDUCHESS: After the martial airs, the harps of heaven!
THE COUNTESS: A crystal shattered by a bell of bronze!
THERESE: Above the laurels, droop the lily's fronds!
THE DOCTOR (*leaning over the* DUKE):
The Duke is very ill. Let all depart.
THERESE: Good-bye, François.
THE ARCHDUCHESS: Good-bye, Franz.
THE COUNTESS: Farewell, Bonaparte.
MARIE-LOUISE (*kneeling, draws the* DUKE'S *head to her shoulder*): How heavily it lies! My son! My son!
THE COUNTESS (*kneeling at the back of the room*):
The King of Rome!
THE ARCHDUCHESS (*kneeling beside her, with* THERESE):
Reichstadt.
THERESE: Poor little one!
THE DUKE (*delirious*): Horses! The horses!
THE PRIEST (*who enters with the acolytes, carrying waxen tapers*): Pray, for the death dews gather.
THE DUKE: Horses! For I must ride to meet my Father!
(*Great tears roll down his cheeks.*)
MARIE-LOUISE: Dear, let your Mother wipe the tear that glisters.
THE DUKE: No, bring the Victories who are my sisters!
Dimly I've seen them for so many years. . . .
And now they bathe their haloes in my tears.
MARIE-LOUISE: What is it, dear?
THE DUKE (*shuddering*): Nothing. . . . What could it be?
(*He looks around, troubled, as if he feared someone had overheard.*)
A secret, just for Father and for me.
(*He points to the lace that veils the cradle.*)
Let that lace veil, laid gently over me,
Receive the sigh that will set Europe free.
Too many need my death, . . . and he departs
Who has been murdered in so many hearts.

(*He closes his eyes for a moment.*)
It will all be so ugly! . . . First, the bowmen,
Lackeys with torches, and the weeping women. . . .
The monks in brown, telling their wooden beads. . . .
Then lying in the chapel . . . and the weeds.
(*He grows even paler, and bites his lips.*)

MARIE-LOUISE: O son, what troubles you?

THE DUKE: From . . . from this morning,
The Austrian Court will have six weeks of mourning!

THE COUNTESS: Look, for a winding sheet he gropes to find
The cradle veil.

THE DUKE (*gasping*): Ugly . . . but never mind.
Austrian funerals are dark and dull,—
But Paris Christenings are beautiful!
(*Calling.*) General Hartmann. . . .

GENERAL HARTMANN (*coming forward*): Prince.

THE DUKE (*touching the cradle, sets it rocking*):
I breathe my last
While in this golden cradle swings my past.
(*With the other hand, he fumbles under his pillows and draws out a book, signing to the* GENERAL *to take it.*)
General. . . .
(*The* GENERAL *takes the book, and the* DUKE *touches the cradle once more.*)
The past is cradled here. See what has come,
The Duke of Reichstadt rocks the King of Rome!
You find the marked page, General?

GENERAL HARTMANN (*who has opened the book, huskily*):
I find it. I . . .

THE DUKE: Thank you. Please read it to me while I die.

MARIE-LOUISE (*with a bitter cry*):
Oh, no! Not die! O little son of mine!

THE DUKE (*solemnly, lying back on his pillows*):
You may begin to read.

GENERAL HARTMANN (*standing at the foot of the bed, reads from the marked page of the book*): *At seven, the line*
Began to form. The soldiers of the Guard
Were first in place.

MARIE-LOUISE (*realizing what this story is, falls on her knees, sobbing*): Oh, Franz!

GENERAL HARTMANN: *The crowd pressed hard.*
Then came a cry that shook the sky's blue dome.
A sobbing shout, "Long live the King of Rome."

MARIE-LOUISE: Franz!

GENERAL HARTMANN:
Cannon boomed, flags fluttered in the breeze.
The Cardinal received their Majesties.
The mighty train swept by in measured stages,
Heralds, commanders, officers and pages.
Officers of artillery and the . . .
(*He stops reading, for the* DUKE *has closed his eyes.*)

THE DUKE (*opening his eyes*): And the . . . ?

GENERAL HARTMANN: *Chamberlains of the palace; ministry;*
The master of the horse.

THE DUKE (*in a voice that is hardly audible*): I pray you, read.

GENERAL HARTMANN: *Staff of officers, the eagles in the lead.*
Aldobrandini held the chrism cloth.
Countesses of Vilain and Beauvain both
Carried the salt box and the chrism cup.

THE DUKE (*paler and paler, his lips hardly able to form the words*): Pray you, read on, sir. Mother, hold me up.

GENERAL HARTMANN: *As next of kin, the Archduke acted for*
His Godfather, the Austrian Emperor;
Then Queen Hortense, and at the Queen's right hand,
The Imperial Godmother. So all was planned.
At last, the King of Rome appeared, held high
By Madame Montesquieu. His Majesty
Whose fine appearance all the crowd admired,
In a grand robe of silver was attired.

The Duke of Valmy held the splendid thing.
The princes.

THE DUKE: Skip the princes.

GENERAL HARTMANN (*turning a page*): *Then the king*

THE DUKE:

Skip the kings, too . . . The last bit . . . Do you see?

GENERAL HARTMANN (*turning several pages*): *Then . . .*

THE DUKE: I do not hear . . . Read loud.

THE DOCTOR (*to* PROKESCH): The agony.

GENERAL HARTMANN (*with a trembling voice*):

When in the choir the herald cried once more
"Long live the King," before they could restore
The infant to his nurse 'mid these alarms,
The Emperor took him from . . .
(*He hesitates, looking at* MARIE-LOUISE.)

THE DUKE (*eagerly, and with infinite nobility, laying his hand upon the bowed head of* MARIE-LOUISE, *kneeling at his bedside*): *"The Empress' arms."*

(*At this word, which brings forgiveness and restores her crown, the mother sobs wildly.*)

GENERAL HARTMANN:

And held him high, that France might see his son.
Te Deum . . .

THE DUKE (*whose head falls forward*): Mama!

MARIE-LOUISE: François!

(*She throws herself on his breast.*)

THE DUKE (*opening his eyes once more*): Napoleon.

GENERAL HARTMANN:

Te Deum laudamus *filled that vast place.*
That evening very France seemed all ablaze
With the great splendour and the great delight.

THE DOCTOR (*touching* GENERAL HARTMANN'S *arm*): Dead.

(*Silence. The* GENERAL *closes the book.*)

METTERNICH: Bring his uniform.—Of course, the white.

IN THE CRYPT OF THE CAPUCINS, AT VIENNA

And now sleep well. God keep you all the night,
O soul to whom death even in youth was sweet.
Sleep in this vault, thy prison made complete,
Coffin of bronze and uniform of white.

In vain the scribbler searches what to write.
The poet knows. Historians repeat.
My verse may perish, but Time cannot cheat
Wagram of that pale form against the light.

Sleep. 'Tis not Legend always that deceives.
A dream is truer far than yellowed leaves.
Sleep. You were Youth. You were Napoleon's son.

Lo, the bronze coffins cumber all the tomb.
So many kings sleep in this narrow room.
Sleep, in the gray light, thou still lonely one.

Sleep, in this mean place, where the archdukes fair
Are clothed in bronze that Time has breathed upon;
A station 'twixt two worlds, the work undone,
The piled up luggage left to ghostly care.

The English tourists plant their heels and stare.
Then to the church that holds thy heart they run.
Sleep. You were Youth. You were Napoleon's son.
You were a martyr. Soft. It is my prayer.

A Capuchin, who thinks we stay too long,
Strikes with his keys thy coffin; then, sing-song,
Gives name and date, and then the stiff locks turn.

Sleep well! But dream that someone loved thy name,
And leaving in its bronze thy weary frame,
Has stolen thy heart, kept in its silver urn.

CHANTICLEER

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

In Verse

To My Son Jean

CHANTICLEER

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Chanticleer.
Patou.
The Blackbird.
The Peacock.
The Nightingale.
The Great Horned Owl.
The Hoot Owl.
Little Scops.
The Fighting Cock.
The Hunting Dog.
A Carrier Pigeon.
The Woodpecker.
The Cat.
The Turkey.
The Duck.
The Young Guinea.
The Gander.
A Capon.
A Pullet.
Another Pullet.
A Bantam.
A Young Cockerel.
Two Pigeons, Who Are Tumblers.
The Swan.
The Magpie Usher.
The Cuckoo.
First Rabbit.

Second Rabbit.
Two Chicks.
The Night Birds.
The Cocks.
The Toads.
The Pheasant Hen.
The Guinea Hen.
The Old Hen.
The White Hen.
The Gray Hen.
The Black Hen.
The Buff Hen.
The Houdan.
The Turkey Hen.
The Goose.
The Mole.
The Warbler of the Gardens.
The Warbler of the Reeds.
A Spider.
A Heron, a Pigeon, a Guinea Pig.
The Creatures of the Barnyard, The Beasts of the Forest, The Rabbits, The Birds, The Bees, The Wasps, The Cicadas, Voices.

PRELUDE

(*The three strokes are heard. The curtain trembles and begins to rise. At that moment a cry is heard, "Not yet!" and*

THE DIRECTOR OF THE PLAY (*springing from his proscenium box, hurries on the stage. He is an important looking personage in a black suit, and as he rushes on the stage, he repeats*):

Not yet!

(*The curtain falls; the Director turns to the audience, and addressing himself first to the Prompter's box, he begins to speak, in verse*):

Not yet! Behold a moving wall,
And, since so much is certain,
Why let impatience spoil it all
By jerking up the curtain?

Charming, to view this great red wall
With mask and chaplet gilded
And from the sounds let guess forestall
The scene the author builded.

Just this one eve, let's make believe;
Each to his taste construct the scene,
Listen and dream . . .

(*Bending forward, the Director listens to the sounds which begin to come from behind the curtain.*)

A step, I do believe.
Is it a road? . . . Bird's wings! A garden green?
Don't raise the curtain yet!

A magpie, screaming loud, takes wing,
I hear shoes' wooden clatter:
A courtyard . . . near a vale . . . in spring;
Dogs bark. Birds sing and chatter.

Little by little bring the scene to light.
Sound, more than sight, creates an atmosphere.
—A sheep-bell tinkles, now is silent quite:
There must be grass, for goats are cropping near.

And surely in the valley there are trees,—
A bullfinch sings the song born in her throat;
In the farmyard an osier cage, one sees,
For hark! a blackbird's tutored, captive note.

A wagon rattles on the cobble stones;
A brimming bucket splashes from a well;
Birds' feet upon the roof,—a wing dove's moans!
A barnyard, or a mill. Which, who can tell?

Some straw is moved: I heard a latch that fell.
A stable, or a haymow! Weather clear,—
I heard a locust! Sunday! Hear the bell?
Two jaybirds call. A forest, then, is near.

Hush! Out of all the cheerful summer sounds,
Nature composes in a happy dream
An overture most lovely that abounds
In distance, winds, and evening all agleam.

And every sound,—song of a passing lass,
Chuckle of babies on a donkey's back,—
Tells of a summer Sunday, after Mass;—
Crack of a gun! The music of the pack!

HIS·HEART MAKES·THE·BIRD;·NOT·HIS·WALK·NOR·HIS·WIT!

A window opens; and a door is closed;—
The farmyard picture every mind must keep.
The harness jingles; off the wagon goes.
The dog sleeps sound; Grimalkin feigns a sleep.

Sunday! The good folk keep their holiday!
A VOICE (*behind the scenes, while the stamping of a horse is heard also*): *Ho, there, old Gray!*
ANOTHER VOICE (*as if calling to somebody within*): *Coming? We'll get home late!*
ANOTHER VOICE: *Is the dove cote barred?*
A MAN'S VOICE: *Yes.*
A WOMAN'S VOICE: *Oh, my parasol!*
A MAN'S VOICE (*with a crack of the whip*): *Get ap!*
The wagon rattles through the gate.

They're off, the harness jingling loud and long.
With songs and laughter they are on the way.
A sudden turn has cut in two their song.
. . . No one is left. Now, we can have the play.

Philosophy may say no soul is left.
Well humbly then we'll hope a heart is there.
Life of all drama is not yet bereft,—
Laughter and pain remain when man is otherwhere.

(*He listens*)
A bumblebee with burly noise and fuss
Knocks at a lily's door. She lets him in.
Æsop shall fill the prompter's box for us,
No mortal else. Now let the play begin!

The people of the play perhaps are small,
But
(*looking up*)
Alexander!

(*to the Audience*):
—My chief carpenter,—
Let it come down!
VOICE (*above*): *It comes!*
THE DIRECTOR: A magic wall
Of glass that shows the size we men prefer.

Hark to the violins! With crystal bows
Their perfect harmony the crickets play.
On go the footlights as at other shows,
The small musicians vanish quite away.

A small brown leader of a cricket choir!
Burru! The bumblebee's emerged, all yellow!
A chicken cheeps; that makes LaFontaine nigher!
Beethoven's cuckoo,—hear the noisy fellow!

Soft! Let the garish lights be very dim!
Hist! The mysterious watchman of the wood
From this strange setting bids us list to him,
Three times he calls. Silence is understood.

We have not grown too dull for Nature's school.
Stale Custom's reign is banished in a trice.
The curtain lifts, by Master Cuckoo's rule,
For the Woodpecker gives the signal thrice!

(*The curtain rises*)

ACT I

THE EVENING OF THE PHEASANT HEN

THE SETTING

Interior of a Farmyard

The sounds have given the scene in very fact.
A sagging gate. Vine-covered wall. Some hay,
A dung-hill. Heaps of straw. The waning day.
A country scene. So let us watch the act.

On the thatched roof, a very cataract
Of vine and bloom. Kennel not far away.
Farm implements in orderly array.
In march the Flock. The lifted claws contract.

A blackbird in a cage. A cart. A well,
Ducks. Sunshine. There a feather fell.
A lonely wing flutters the quiet air.

The chicks on fighting for a worm are bent.
The turkey's wattle makes a scarlet flare.
Warm, sunny silence; clucking, deep content.

SCENE I

(*All the Poultry,* HENS, PULLETS, COCKERELS, *walking about or climbing up and down the little ladder that leads into the Hen House;* CHICKS, DUCKS, TURKEYS, *etc.; the* BLACKBIRD *in his cage, which hangs in the wistaria vine; the* CAT, *sleeping on the wall; later, a* BUTTERFLY *among the flowers.*)

THE WHITE HEN (*pecking*): Ah, how exquisite!
ANOTHER HEN (*running up*): She is eating!
ALL THE HENS (*running up*): What?
WHITE HEN: A dainty glow-worm I, at last, have got,—
Perfumes the beak, with roses he's been stuffin'!
THE BLACK HEN (*stopping before the* BLACKBIRD'S *cage, admiring*): He whistles like a . . .
THE WHITE HEN: Like a ragamuffin!
THE TURKEY GOBBLER (*correcting her solemnly*):
Rather, a shepherd lad of Sicily!
THE DUCK: He never finishes.
THE TURKEY: Indeed, not he.
Finish!
(*He hums the air the* BLACKBIRD *whistles.*)
"How sweet it is to pluck . . . to pluck . . ."
It is not Art to finish, Duck. "To pluck! . . .
Bravo!"
(*The* BLACKBIRD *comes out of his cage and lighting on the wistaria, makes a bow.*)
A CHICK (*astonished*): O see! He's coming out!
THE BLACKBIRD (*bowing*):
You bet! It catches me when people shout.
(*He steps back.*)

THE CHICK: But he is caged.
THE TURKEY: No, no, my Chick. He's free.
Abrupt he comes, and goes as suddenly.
A cage he has, but one without a latch.
"To pluck" . . . and never tell the thing you catch,
That's Art!
THE BLACK HEN (*catching sight of a butterfly alighting on the flowers, at the back, that grow higher than the wall*):
Look, what a lovely butterfly!
WHITE HEN: Where?
BLACK HEN: Yonder; where the woodbine grows so high.
THE TURKEY (*instructively*):
We call that great moth "March's butterfly."
CHICK (*following the butterfly with his eyes*): He's on a pink!
WHITE HEN (*to the* TURKEY): The March one? Why?
BLACKBIRD (*poking his head through the bars*):
Easy! Because he comes in Mid July.
WHITE HEN: The Blackbird's tumbling.
THE TURKEY (*wagging his head*): Not for tumbling's sake!
ANOTHER CHICKEN: Pretty, a butterfly!
THE BLACKBIRD: An easy thing to make;
Briefly,—you take a W and you set it on a Y.
A HEN (*enchanted*):
Four beak strokes,—he has sketched a butterfly!
TURKEY: He schematizes! "Sketch?" The word is humbling!
Master in jester's mask, he thinks while tumbling.
A CHICK (*to a* HEN):
Mama, why do the cat and dog so hate each other?
THE BLACKBIRD (*poking his head through the bars*):
Each wants the opera seat held by the other.
THE CHICK (*bewildered*): They have a theatre?
BLACKBIRD: A fairy one.
THE CHICK: Huh?
BLACKBIRD: Yes. Each time, before the play is done,

The Sleeping Princess, Block o' Wood, in bliss
Wakes, blushing to Prince Kindling's glowing kiss.

THE TURKEY (*dully dazzled by this labored nonsense*):
How cleverly he shows that strife of races
Is nothing more nor less than strife of places.
A vigorous thinker!

THE BUFF HEN (*to the* WHITE HEN, *who is pecking*):
You eat pimentoes?

WHITE HEN: Every day, I think.

BUFF HEN: Are they so good?

WHITE HEN: They make the feathers pink.

BUFF HEN: Ah!

A VOICE (*in the distance*): Cuckoo!

WHITE HEN: Listen!

VOICE: Cuckoo!

A GRAY HEN (*running up quite out of breath*):
Oh, which Cuckoo?
The wild one in the woods, or hid from view,
Lodged in the lodge, he of the wooden clock?

THE VOICE (*farther away*): Cuckoo!

WHITE HEN (*listening*): The wild one.

GRAY HEN (*catching her breath*): Oh, I had a shock!
I thought I'd missed the Other!

WHITE HEN (*coming closer*): Then it's true!
You love him?

GRAY HEN (*sadly*): Yes, without a single view!
There in the kitchen hangs my worshipped one
Between the farmer's greatcoat and his gun.
I hear him calling and I run,—to find
He has drawn back; closed is his window-blind.
This evening I will roost here, on this sill.
(*She takes her stand on the threshold.*)

A VOICE: White Hen! . . .

SCENE II

The Same. A CARRIER PIGEON *on the roof; later,* CHANTICLEER

WHITE HEN (*looking around, moving her head with little jerks*):
Who called me?
THE VOICE: Just a Carrier Dove.
WHITE HEN (*still looking in every direction*): Where?
THE PIGEON: Here, upon the slooping roof, above.
WHITE HEN (*looking up and seeing him*): Oh!
THE PIGEON: With grave dispatches I am on my way,
And yet, I stop. Good day.
WHITE HEN: Postman, good day.
PIGEON: Since I'm appointed Postman of the Air
Across your farmyard I must often fare,
And I would be so happy if I could . . .
WHITE HEN (*spies a grain of corn*): One moment! . . .
ANOTHER HEN (*running up to her, inquisitively*): She's eating!
ALL THE HENS (*running up*): Is it good?
WHITE HEN: A grain of corn.
GRAY HEN (*taking up the interrupted conversation with the* WHITE HEN): Yes, on this very sill!
WHITE HEN (*looking at the door*): The door is shut.
GRAY HEN: Ah, but I'll stick my bill,
When I hear my Cuckoo, and hope he will look who . . .
THE PIGEON (*calling impatiently*): White Hen!
WHITE HEN: One moment!
(*To the other* HEN): But . . . to see this Cuckoo.
Stick your bill, where?
GRAY HEN (*showing a round hole at the bottom of the door*):
Through Tabby's hole, before his little shutter
Falls.
THE PIGEON (*complainingly*):
'Might as well be drinking from the gutter.
Whitest of hens . . .

WHITE HEN (*hopping toward him*): You said, sir? . . .
PIGEON: I would be . . .
WHITE HEN (*with a curtsey*): Bluest of bluecoats! . . .
PIGEON: Happy, could I see . . .
WHITE HEN: What?
PIGEON: I am audacious . . . Oh, I should be dumb . . .
See, for a moment . . .
ALL THE HENS (*impatiently*): Well, what?
PIGEON: Oh, . . . his comb!
WHITE HEN (*to the* FLOCK, *laughing*): He wants to see . . .
PIGEON: Of course he holds aloof . . .
But just a glimpse!
WHITE HEN (*to the others, laughing*):
He's clawing down the roof.
Be calm!
THE PIGEON: My wife and I admire him so!
WHITE HEN: Like all the world.
PIGEON: Yes, ma'am. Of course, I know,—
But travelling so, I want to tell my wife,
From actual seeing, what he's like in life.
WHITE HEN (*pecking tranquilly*):
He is superb, there's no use to deny.
PIGEON: We in the dove cote hear him crowing nigh.
It adds a nobler beauty to the scene
Than a white hamlet to a mountain's green.
His voice reëchoes from the utmost height,
Pierces the azures like a ray of light,—
A golden needle with a thread of gold
Joining the sky and valley fold on fold!
He is the Cock!
BLACKBIRD (*hopping in and out of his cage*):
For whom all hearts go toc-toc.
A HEN: Our Cock!
BLACKBIRD: His, her, its, our, your, and their Cock!
TURKEY (*to the* PIGEON): He will soon be here.
PIGEON: You, sir, you know him well?

TURKEY (*importantly*):
Know him? I saw the youngster chip his shell.
I gave him bugle lessons.
PIGEON: You, sir?
TURKEY: No doubt. It is no trouble
To teach the cockcrow, when you have a gobble.
PIGEON (*eagerly*): Where was he born?
THE TURKEY (*showing an old, covered basket, worn and broken*): Hatched in that very basket.
THE PIGEON: His mother's still alive?—if one may ask it.
TURKEY: There.
PIGEON: Where?
TURKEY: That basket.
PIGEON: Her strain?
TURKEY: The foster mother's race,—
A Gascon Hen, yes, Pau's her native place.
BLACKBIRD (*poking his head out*):
The very Gascon hen, as like as not,
King Henry wished for every Frenchman's pot.
PIGEON:
To have hatched the Cock! How proud that Hen must be!
TURKEY: A foster mother's pride that's good to see.
Her lusty chick,—that's all she seems to know,
And if we tell her we can see him grow,
The embers of her mind a moment glow.
(*He turns to the basket.*)
He's growing, Grandma.
ALL THE FLOCK: We can see him grow!
(*Immediately, the cover of the basket lifts and a tousled old head emerges.*)
THE PIGEON (*tenderly, to the* OLD HEN):
It pleases you, ma'am, that the Flock has said it?
THE HEN IN THE BASKET (*nodding her head, sententiously*):
Aye, Wednesday's crop does Tuesday credit.
(*She disappears. The cover falls.*)
TURKEY: The lid from time to time comes up like that,

And, crack! a bit of folk-lore comes so pat,
Some say she has the cunning to adapt . . .

PIGEON: White Hen!

TURKEY (*as he goes back*):
And sometimes her remarks are really apt!

THE OLD HEN (*lifting the cover of her basket, behind him*):
When the Peacock's away, then the Turkey tail's spread.
(*The Turkey turns; the lid of the basket has fallen.*)

PIGEON (*to the* WHITE HEN):
Ma'am, is it true, as all the world has said
That Chanticleer is never hoarse? Ma'am, is that true?

WHITE HEN (*pecking busily*): Of course.

PIGEON (*with growing fervor*):
How proud the Flock must be that one of you
Is counted 'mongst those famous animals
Whose name will live till yonder stable falls.

TURKEY: Very proud! Very!
(*to a* CHICK) Who are those animals?

CHICK (*reciting glibly, at first*):
They are, Noah's dove and the barb of St. Roche,
And the horse of Cali . . .

TURKEY: Cali? . . .

CHICK: C . . . Cali . . .

PIGEON: The Cock!
Is it true that his song, rhythmic, warlike, yet gay,
Makes laughter in labour, affrights birds of prey?

WHITE HEN (*pecking away*): True.

CHICK (*still struggling*): Cali . . .

PIGEON: Is it true that the Cock
Guards each shell that is rife with the hope of the Flock
So the wiggliest weasel that ever stretched leg
Cannot mar his bosom with stain of . . .

BLACKBIRD (*poking his head through the bars*): An egg?

WHITE HEN: Yes, that's true.

CHICK (*still struggling for the word*): Cali . . .

TURKEY (*prompting*): Gu? . . .

PIGEON: Hen, is it true . . .
CHICK (*jumping for joy at finding the lost name*): Gula.
PIGEON: . . . That there be such marvels as folks say there are,—
A Secret,—a Secret that makes his comb red;
So red that the cockscomb awakes in its bed
As if called by its name?
WHITE HEN (*rather bored*): Yes, Posty, it's true.
PIGEON: He has told it to no one, not even to you?
WHITE HEN: No.
PIGEON: Keeps his secret away from his wife?
WHITE HEN (*correcting him*): Wives.
PIGEON (*gasping a little*): A doub . . . double life?
BLACKBIRD: He crows. You coo, you know.
PIGEON: He hasn't told
His favourite wife?
THE HOUDAN (*sharply*): No!
WHITE HEN (*also sharply*): Nothing!
BLACK HEN (*also sharply*): No!
BLACKBIRD (*poking his head through the bars*):
Silence! And see unfold
An aërial drama. Watch the butterfly.
Small Pegasus,—he sees not . . .
(*A butterfly net is seen above the wall; it is coming very stealthily toward the butterfly, resting on a flower.*)
A HEN: Oh, what?
THE TURKEY (*solemnly*): Destiny.
BLACKBIRD: In gauze.
WHITE HEN: Gracious! It's a net, . . .
And on a rod. . . .
BLACKBIRD: What is more serious yet,
Beyond the rod, a boy!
(*In a stage whisper, looking at the Butterfly*):
You dodge a thorn.
To-night, four pins your plumage will adorn.
ALL (*anxiously watching the slow approach of the net*):

He stirs . . . It's coming . . . yes, but very slow . . .
'Twill catch him! No! Yes, surely! I say, no!
(*The Butterfly is almost captured, when one suddenly hears afar*): Cocorico!
(*Warned by the cry, the Butterfly flits away. The net wavers a moment disappointedly, and then disappears.*)

SEVERAL HENS: Hein? What? What's that?
(*A Hen, who mounted on a wheelbarrow, watches the Butterfly's flight*): He has escaped . . . He's free!

BLACKBIRD (*ironically*): Chanticleer, playing at knight errantry.

PIGEON (*much moved*): Chanticleer!

A HEN: On the wall! He comes!

ANOTHER HEN: He is very near!

WHITE HEN (*to the* PIGEON): You'll see! A splendid cock!

BLACKBIRD (*poking his head through the bars*): Ho, Chanticleer!
Easy to make, a cock.

TURKEY: He thinks with force! Oh! . . .

BLACKBIRD: You take a Honfleur melon for the torso;
For legs, asparagus of Argenteuil:
Bayonne pimento head, as I'm a merle!
Currants of Bar-le-Duc for eyes; for tail,
Rouen leeks, curved, blue-green: Lest Soissons fail,
He has two tiny beans for ears. And so
Behold your Cock complete!

THE PIGEON (*mildly*): Without the crow!

BLACKBIRD: That detail! You admit that it resembles?
(*He shows him* CHANTICLEER *who appears on the wall.*)

PIGEON (*looking at* CHANTICLEER *with very different eyes*):
No, not at all! Under a crest that trembles
I see the very Chevalier of Day.
A burdened wain trembling upon its way
Has dropped the gold-green cloak that wraps him round,
And with a shining sickle it is bound!

CHANTICLEER (*on the wall, with a long, guttural sigh*): Co . . .

BLACKBIRD: Say, when he gargles in his throat like that
He's courting or composing, bet your hat!

CHANTICLEER (*motionless on the wall, his head lifted*):
Flame! Lighten!
BLACKBIRD: He's burbling!
CHANTICLEER: Ah, enclose! . . .
A HEN: He pauses, claw in air . . .
BLACKBIRD: Poetic pose!
CHANTICLEER: Thine is the only gold, O Golden One,
The wise adore.
PIGEON (*in an awed whisper*): He speaks to what?
BLACKBIRD (*jeeringly*): Sonny, the sun.
CHANTICLEER:
Thou driest the tears of every living thing;
Thou makest dead blossoms shimmer in the breeze,—
A gentle fate that lendest life and wing
And makes playmates for Pyrenees spring
Roussillon's almond trees.

I worship thee whose glory makest bright
Labour's damp forehead; gilds the honeycomb;
Shines in the flower's cup; gilds the thatch with light,
Dividing only multiplies thy might,
Like mother love at home!

I sing to thee. Accept me as thy priest!
You smile, and soapsuds glisten like a gem.
Your last ray lights the cottage of the least,
Whose toil began with day and has not ceased;
You smile good night, to them.

BLACKBIRD (*poking his head through the bars*):
He's at it now! Too late to head him off!
TURKEY (*watching* CHANTICLEER, *who, hopping to a hayrick, by degrees comes down*): How proud he struts.
A HEN (*drinking from a patent cone-shaped contrivance*):
A very handy trough!
BLACKBIRD: A Toulousain, singing "O my-ee Countr-ee."

CHANTICLEER (*beginning to walk about the yard*):
Thou turnest . . .
ALL THE HENS (*running to the* WHITE HEN):
What's she eating?
WHITE HEN: Corn, you see.
CHANTICLEER:
You make the sunflower turn her yellow head;
Gleam on my gilded brother of the tower;
Shine softly through where linden boughs are spread,—
And who beneath that blessed tree would tread
Must crush a golden flower.

The earthen pot becomes a gilded urn;
The cloth spread out to dry, a banner fair;
The hayricks wear gold mantles in their turn;
The small brown beehive, see it glow and burn!
The Maid with Golden Hair!

Glory upon the meadows and the vines!
Glory upon the threshold and the field!
The lizard's eyes are gemmed; the swan's wing shines;
Glorious the tiniest and the boldest lines!
Glory to thee we yield!

The shadow falls from thee, O Radiant One,
Walking beside us, lying at our feet;
Thou makest two gifts, where was only one.
Darkness itself thy gracious will has done!
Thy reign is made complete!

I worship thee! Thou fillest the air with posies;
Flames in the streams; in all the bushes, gods!
The darkest tree a golden glow discloses!
O Sun! Without thee, roses were . . . just roses;
And clods, just clods!

PIGEON: Let me go home and tell that to my wife!
She'll talk about it all her natural life!
CHANTICLEER (*seeing him, with stately courtesy*):
Thanks, Stranger Bluecoat. Such applause is sweet.
Pray lay my service at her coral feet.
(*The* PIGEON *flies off.*)
BLACKBIRD: And right he is. He ought to boost his boosters.
CHANTICLEER (*heartily, to the Farmyard*):
To work, chicks, hens, ducks, ganders, roosters!
Gaily to work!
(*A fly passes, buzzing.*)
I like you, buzzing fly!
Watch her. Her flight is charming to the eye.
TURKEY (*pompously*): Yes, but in my esteem she lost a lot
After the little matter of . . .
CHANTICLEER (*going toward him*): Well, what?
TURKEY: The fly upon the . . .
CHANTICLEER: Well, I don't know why.
What proves the coach could climb, without the fly?
Far better than the coachman's "Hup! Go 'lang!"
Was the small song of sunshine that she sang.
Believe 'twas the force of his oaths, if you will,
And the coachman who carried the coach up the hill,
No, No! More effective than any whip's smart
Was the fly's song of sunshine that came from the heart!
TURKEY: Yes . . . but . . .
CHANTICLEER (*turning his back on him*):
Joyfully, let us work. Time, Master Gander,
To lead your ladies to the pond out yander.
GANDER (*coolly*): You think so?
CHANTICLEER (*going briskly toward him*):
Gander, who'd be so dashing.
Go to the pool before you do your splashing!
(*The Ganders start off hurriedly.*)
Here, bantam, it is time that you were working.

Thirty-two slugs, remember, and no shirking!
You, Cockerel, try your cocorico through,
And let the Echo say it after you.

COCKEREL (*bashfully*): The Echo, why?

CHANTICLEER: To teach your epiglottis
Exactly what a cockerel's proper note is.
I did the trick;—I'm told I did it well,—
Almost before my tail shook off the shell.

A HEN (*affectedly*): That's most uninteresting.

CHANTICLEER: Everything's interesting!
Hover your eggs beneath your idle wing.
(*The Hen scuttles away. To Another Hen*):
Under the vervein and the potentilla
Nab all the slugs. And if a caterpillar
Would eat our flowers, just grab him,—don't be slack!—
And make him rub his stomach . . . with his back!
(*The Hen goes out. To Another Hen*):
Chase the grasshopper from the cabbage beds.
Their catapults are riddling all the heads.
(*The Hen goes out. To all the remaining Hens*):
You . . .
(*Catching sight of the* OLD HEN *whose head appears above the rim of the basket*):
Why, good evening, Mammy.
(*The* OLD HEN *looks at him admiringly*): Have I grown?

THE OLD HEN: *Tadpoles turn into frogs if left alone.*

CHANTICLEER: Yes'm.
(*The cover falls. Resuming his tone of command, to the Hens*):
All you, line up and, nimbly, go
Scratch in the meadow.

WHITE HEN (*to the* GRAY HEN): Coming?

GRAY HEN: 'Sh, dear. No!
I'll keep tryst with my Cuckoo.
(*She hides behind the basket.*)

CHANTICLEER: Little Houdan,
What makes you walk so slow and act so wooden?
HOUDAN (*approaching*): 'Cock . . .
CHANTICLEER: What?
HOUDAN: Ain't I your darlin'?
CHANTICLEER (*hurriedly*): 'Sh!
HOUDAN: It hurts me not to know.
WHITE HEN (*coming up from the other side*): Cock . . .
CHANTICLEER: What?
WHITE HEN: Since I'm your favourite . . .
CHANTICLEER: S . . . sh!
WHITE HEN: I think I ought to know . . .
BLACK HEN (*who has come quietly up behind him*):
Cock . . .
CHANTICLEER: What?
BLACK HEN (*coquettishly*):
Because . . . because you love me so . . .
CHANTICLEER: S . . . s . . . sh!
BLACK HEN: Tell me, my dear . . .
WHITE HEN: The secret of . . .
HOUDAN: Your crow.
(*She hops closer. In a voice full of curiosity*):
All hidden in your throat and closely fit,
Have you a whistle? . . .
CHANTICLEER: Hidden, isn't it?
WHITE HEN (*same business*):
I guess you use the means all tenors use,—
Swallow raw eggs?
CHANTICLEER: Am I a mink? The deuce!
BLACK HEN (*same business*):
You take some snails, the spiral shell and all,
And make a kind of pasty . . .
CHANTICLEER: Pectoral?
ALL THREE: Chanti . . .
CHANTICLEER (*abruptly*): Enough! Be off!
(*They start hastily.*)

But wait! Two words!
Always remember, O my pretty birds,
When your red combs are flashing in the grass,
Coming and going, passing to repass,
Like scarlet poppies playing hide-and-seek,
Real poppies, growing flowers, are small and weak,
Rooted and helpless. Clumsy shepherdesses
Crush with their feet and flout them with their dresses,
Counting their stitches, heedless, as they go,
That 'tis a crime to treat a flower so,—
To crush a posy, even with a woman!
But you, my hens, must never be so . . . human.
Guard the wild carrot, fine lace of the fields.
Spare every bud, but take the slug it yields!
The flowers are sisters, growing on one heather;
Beneath the sickle, let them fall together.
(*They start again. He recalls them.*)
Oh, hey! You know the rule?

A HEN (*bowing*): Oh, yes.

CHANTICLEER: Pay it good heed.
Repeat it . . . Keep . . .

ALL THE HENS (*in concert*): . . . The leader in the lead!

CHANTICLEER: Now you may go, my Hens. No, stay, come back!
(*In a very grave voice.*)
Never peck while you cross a track.

A SOUND (*far off*): Honk! Honk!

CHANTICLEER: Come back!

SOUND (*nearer*): Honk! Honk! Honk! Honk!

CHANTICLEER (*barring the way, while the Hens tremble*):
Be very still and wait.

SOUND (*passing and growing fainter*): Honk! Honk!

CHANTICLEER (*stepping aside to let the Hens pass*): Now!

GRAY HEN (*hidden*): No one saw me!

HOUDAN (*going out last of all*): I am here to state
We'll soon taste gasoline on all the corn!

SCENE III

(CHANTICLEER; *the* BLACKBIRD *in his cage; the* CAT, *still sleeping on the wall; the* GRAY HEN, *hidden behind the basket of the* OLD HEN.)

CHANTICLEER (*to himself after a while*):

I'll tell it to no Chicken born,
This secret whose glory weighs down like a rock.
I myself will forget it. Be gay, Master Cock.
(*He struts gaily up and down.*)
I'm proud. I'm good looking. I strut and I stop.
I do a fancy step and a turn or two I try;
And sometimes with a pretty lass
So pleasantly the time I pass
The old wheelbarrow on the grass lifts both its shafts on high.
To-morrow for burdens! . . . A nice grain of rye.
I'll eat and be merry. It reddens the comb.
So red will be my comb and eye
The robin scarce with me can vie
The bullfinch with his gorgeous tie must hang his head at home.
Fine weather. Fine spirits. I curvet and crow.
My duty is done. I've a right to this air
Merle would call "like Merlingo."
Musketeer, camerlingo.
My trumpet I blow. I . . .

A TERRIBLE VOICE: Chanticleer, have a care!

CHANTICLEER: Now what Animal tells me, the Cock, to beware?

SCENE IV

PATOU (*baying from his kennel*): Me! Me!
(*He appears.*)

CHANTICLEER (*stepping back*):

It's you, Patou, good shaggy pate?
There are straws all over your eyes, old Mate.

PATOU: But I can see the dust in yourrrs.
CHANTICLEER: Mad, hey?
PATOU: Rrrrrrrr . . .
CHANTICLEER: He's raging when he rolls his rs that way.
PATOU: I'm rolling them to keep you, sirrr, from harm.
Guardian of homestead, garden and of farm,
Over all these I must keep watch and ward,
But 'tis your song that I most closely guard.
I tell you I believe your crow's in danger.
CHANTICLEER: You're growling like the old dog in the manger.
PATOU: Don't go to joking. Something is the matter;—
I tell you I can smell it like a ratter.
CHANTICLEER: You're not a terrier.
PATOU (*shaking his head*): Chanticleer, who knows?
CHANTICLEER (*considering him critically*):
It's true . . . you are . . .
PATOU: Of every breed that grows.
I am just a dog; a son of all the races;
Artois, Saintonge,—in my soul yelp all places,—
Retrievers, mastiffs, spaniels, what d'ye lack,
My soul's a dreaming circle yes, a pack.
Spirit of all the dogs in me behold!
CHANTICLEER: Old friend, no wonder it's a heart of gold!
PATOU: We, Chanticleer, are brothers from our birth;
You sing to the sun and you scratch in the earth;
I, when I plan the choicest kind of fun . . .
CHANTICLEER: You lie on the earth and you sleep in the sun!
PATOU (*barking ecstatically*): Yep!
CHANTICLEER: This double love does serve to make us one!
PATOU: I bay the moon, because I love the sun;
I dig big holes, because I love the sun,—
To let him shine deep down in every one.
CHANTICLEER: I know. The gardener's wife has told the farm!
But come, what ails you? Where's the threatened harm?
My humble, golden reign seems safe. I see no token . . .
THE OLD HEN (*lifting the lid of the basket to show her head*):

The egg looked like marble before it was broken.
(*The cover falls.*)

CHANTICLEER (*to* PATOU): What dangers?

PATOU: There are two. First, there's that cage.
(*One can hear the whistling of the* BLACKBIRD.)

CHANTICLEER: Well, what . . . ?

PATOU: He whistles.

CHANTICLEER: Well?

PATOU: He wants to be "the rage."
He laughs at . . .

CHANTICLEER: What?

PATOU: At everything.

CHANTICLEER (*ironically*): The devil!

PEACOCK (*screams in the distance*):
E . . . on! E . . . on!

PATOU: And that's another evil.

PEACOCK (*further away*): E . . . on!

PATOU: His notes are falser than the village choir.

CHANTICLEER: He's just a fool. Blackbird's a harmless liar.
Why let them vex you?

PATOU: I know they'll work you harm.
Here we are, honest creatures on a farm.
The Peacock's fashion notes, the Blackbird's puns
Just play the mischief with us simple ones.
On marble terraces of new-rich folks
One got his airs. The other got his jokes
From some cheap tradesman's shop-worn stock of wit.
With whistling or with fan-strokes watch 'em hit
At every kind of honest work or love.
Their smoking gas jet flouts the light above.
The last thing in the world one ought to bring
To honest barnyards is the latest thing;
The dullest talker underneath the sun
Has . . . half a meaning or a double one.
You know enough to tell a grain of corn
From worthless pearls. Why let this thing go on?

(*The* BLACKBIRD *whistles "Pleasant it is to pluck . . . to pluck."*)

A bird that whistles tunes!

CHANTICLEER (*indulgently*): Well, anyway
He whistles tunes.

PATOU (*grudgingly*): Part of one tune, I'd say!

CHANTICLEER (*watching the* BLACKBIRD): 'Moves easily.

PATOU: 'Don't put your mind at ease;—
A bird that does a turn on a trapeze!

CHANTICLEER: But look here, Patou, he has lots of sense.

PATOU: Y . . . No he hasn't, with this fool pretense
Of playing cynic. Where the fellow goes,
The lily's soiled; the rose is less a rose.

CHANTICLEER: He has some taste.

PATOU: The taste of any quack,—
It's easy to look decent dressed in black.
A wholesome fellow dares a dash of red.

CHANTICLEER: He is original when all is said.
He's very droll.

PATOU: Ye . . . No, he isn't! Not a single bit.
A trick of foolery is sorry wit.
He plays with words, and makes an epigram
Saying "one is" where plain folks say "I am."

CHANTICLEER: He's an amusing fool.

PATOU: He's quick, and dirty.
It wouldn't strain your wit enough to hurt ye
To say, when watching good old Brindle graze,
"She knows her way to hay, . . . and haes her ways."
Or, say of olu Mrs. Duck behind her back,
"That girl has given her bill to many a quack."
The Blackbird never cares whose name is hit.
Slander he has for style and slang for wit.

CHANTICLEER: The little fellow isn't all to blame.
He wears the modern garb. He plays the game.

PATOU (*growls*): Huh?

CHANTICLEER (*looking at the* BLACKBIRD):
He looks, in his plain coat, as grave as death.
PATOU: An undertaker's man, who buries Faith.
CHANTICLEER (*laughing*):
You make him blacker than he is, I know.
PATOU: A whistling blackbird is a dwarfish crow.
CHANTICLEER: His littleness is not . . .
PATOU (*shaking his ears impressively*): A thing to fear? Indeed?
Satan made evil from an appleseed.
A little piece of cloth can make a sample.
A blackbird and a crow set one example.
The penknife is the cutlass come to town:
A wasp is just a tiger simmered down!
CHANTICLEER (*amused by* PATOU'S *vehemence*):
Well, granted! He's ugly and wicked and dull!
PATOU: We don't know what he is. Is one thought in his skull?
Has he got any heart? *"Tu! tu! tu!"*
CHANTICLEER: But his sin?
PATOU: He sings *"tu-tu, tu-tu"* and does it agin;
And nothing is worse in my straw-filled old eyes
Than to sing *"Tu-tu, tu-tu"* and make it sound wise.
Oh, every day,—that's why I growl and roar,—
Both hearts and words mean less and rattle more!
CHANTICLEER: Patou! . . .
PATOU: They use the language like a very sewer.
I'm no man's lap-dog, but I like things pure.
Hungry and thirsty, but alert and strong,
I'd follow some poor shepherd all day long,
If, when night came, still having naught to eat,
The untroubled waters of the lake I'd meet.
Oh, what are marrow bones and kennel bars
To glassy pools where dogs may lap the stars!
CHANTICLEER (*astonished because* PATOU *sinks his voice almost to a whisper*): Why do you speak so low?
PATOU: I have no choice.

Who speaks of stars to-day must lower his voice.
(*He puts his head sadly between his paws.*)

CHANTICLEER (*comfortingly*): Look up!

PATOU: I'm a cowardly cur, Chanticleer.
I will cry as I please!
(*He howls at the top of his lungs*): Stars!
(*Somewhat consoled*) Be . . . manned! Let 'em hear!

SOME PASSING HENS (*cackling*): Stars! Star-gazer! Stars!

PATOU: There! You hear!
The time when the pullets will whistle is near.

CHANTICLEER (*strutting a bit*):
I sing my song. My hens are true. What then?

PATOU: The heart of the Flock is the heart of the hen.
You pluck from hens' beaks payment for your crowing!

CHANTICLEER: Love lightens labor, sets all hearts to glowing.
And I . . .

PATOU: Cock, I've been young, as young as you;
A devilish eye, devilish good looking, too.
I was deceived! For any better bred
Or better looking? No! She lost her head
Over, now what? now what?
(*He gives two huge barks.* CHANTICLEER *jumps.*)

CHANTICLEER: You scared me!

PATOU: Clean forgot
For a dachshund that trod upon his ears!

BLACKBIRD (*hearing* PATOU'S *last words and sticking his head between the bars of his cage*):
The dachshund copped the girl and hence these tears!
I hear him telling that old dachshund story.
Well, you were it. The dachshund get the glory.
All is one; one is all; and the dachshund won out.
With all my wit you've heard so much about
A widower in black, my beak's still yellow,
And I'm called cuckoo and a naughty fellow!

PATOU: Just let me tell you, sir, it is a puzzle
How one dares certain jests.

BLACKBIRD: O, get a muzzle!
PATOU: You little joker, who the devil are you?
BLACKBIRD: Pet of the poultry yard!
PATOU: To make it rue!
BLACKBIRD: Preached like a prophet. Let me in this game.
(*Hopping along the twisted branches of the wistaria, he comes down.*)
Madam Wistaria is a crooked dame!
PATOU (*seeing him approach*): Rrrrrrr.
CHANTICLEER: Tut, he's a friend!
PATOU: Who mocks behind your back.
CHANTICLEER (*to the* BLACKBIRD):
When you're the topic, gossip doesn't lack.
(*The* OLD HEN, *poking her head above the rim of the basket*):
Strike rotten wood and watch the wood lice scatter.
(*The cover falls.*)
PATOU (*to* CHANTICLEER): He laughs at you.
BLACKBIRD: So, the old priest can chatter.
PATOU (*disregarding him*):
Says, when your soul gives forth its ardent cry,
"He shows his comb outlined against the sky."
CHANTICLEER (*to the* BLACKBIRD): You say that?
BLACKBIRD (*confidentially*): Sure. It don't hurt you, you see,
And jests at you get such applause for me!
PATOU: Look here, do you admire, or hate, the Cock?
BLACKBIRD: I . . . criticize details, . . . admire him in block.
PATOU: You always peck two grains.
BLACKBIRD: I have two dishes.
PATOU: I am straightforward.
BLACKBIRD: Tut! The fellow wishes
To be a water-dog of '48,
I like to seem a little up to date.
PATOU (*making a lunge, but held by his chain*):
I've a good mind to dye your black coat red.

(*The* BLACKBIRD *hops nimbly away and* PATOU *goes back in his corner, growling*):

You're lucky,—though you wouldn't miss your head!

CHANTICLEER: Don't fret yourself. He is trying to be smart.
He would applaud true beauty from his heart.

PATOU: Not with both wings! Don't talk to *me!* A bird
Whose cage stands open, who is so absurd
He'll let good katydids just go to waste
And hop inside to eat that bird food paste!

BLACKBIRD: The towser don't consider for a minute
The poacher likes a pie with blackbirds in it.

PATOU: I know the brushwood has a golden light.

BLACKBIRD: A slug of lead outweighs that gold all right.
The quail has quailed so often; he believes
He tastes so good, roasted in grapevine leaves,
He has grown canny, so the hunting man
Just gets the kind he can; we get the can.

PATOU: The buck superbly through the forest passes
What though his hoof strike sometimes mid the grasses
A broken cartridge!

BLACKBIRD: Yes, and that's just the reason,
Hat racks are cheapest in the hunting season.

PATOU: But liberty . . . the scent of violets . . .

BLACKBIRD: Your uncle isn't taking any bets.
Wild wood's not varnished like my new trapeze;
Nests are not half so water tight as these;
Wild birds are taught no tunes and rain-filled pools
Ain't water filtered by the latest rules.

(PATOU *moves impatiently, and* BLACKBIRD *hops a little farther away, saying*):

Sling all the mud you please! I have my tub!

CHANTICLEER (*a little out of patience*):

Don't you get tired of all this flub-a-dub?

BLACKBIRD: My Cock, I like to make you show your spurs.

PATOU: Rrrr. Pitch him out, however he demurrrrrs.

BLACKBIRD: Don't say "demurs," good dog. Say "though he kicks."

CHANTICLEER: This endless word play in my gullet sticks.

BLACKBIRD: I sling my slang almighty well, I think
A Paris sparrow taught me. Slinging ink
And slinging slang are all the rage in Paris so he says.

CHANTICLEER: I knew a Robin well in other days.
He was the chosen friend of Michelet.
The poet's comrade did not talk that way.

BLACKBIRD: I keep up with the times. Old Patou's nutty.
One can't be smart and stick at being smutty.

PATOU: You stinking thing! How can you let him be, Cock?
"Smutty's" his password; "smart" is for the Peacock.

CHANTICLEER (*scornful*): The Peacock?

PATOU (*furiously*): Yes, the Peacock.

THE BLACKBIRD (*showing* PATOU *to* CHANTICLEER):
He's foaming at the mouth like English ale.

CHANTICLEER: What does he do?

BLACKBIRD (*before* PATOU *can answer*):
He makes eyes with his tail!

PATOU: His dandyism our contentment rifles.

CHANTICLEER: Where do you see it?

PATOU: In a thousand trifles.

THE OLD HEN (*bobbing up*):
Down stream, a bubble broke and sank;
Washing was done along the bank.

CHANTICLEER: So far, I've seen no bubbles, I declare.

PATOU (*pointing to a passing* GUINEA PIG):
My Cock, just watch that Guinea Pig out there.

CHANTICLEER (*looking at him*): Isn't he yellow?

GUINEA PIG (*in a tone of annoyance*): Khaki, please.

CHANTICLEER (*to* PATOU): Kha . . . ?

PATOU: Bubble one.
Now watch that waddling duck go past, my son.

CHANTICLEER: She's going to take her bath.

DUCK (*turning and correcting him drily*): You mean my tub.

CHANTICLEER: Her . . . What? What's that? Her . . .
PATOU: Bubble, bub!
(*At this moment, the* CUCKOO CLOCK *begins to strike*):
Cuckoo!
THE GRAY HEN (*leaving her hiding place runs wildly to the cottage*):
'Tis he! By old Grimalkin's hole
I soon shall see the idol of my soul!
(*She pokes her head in the cat hole. The clock is silent.*)
Alas, too late!
(*Calling*) Once more! Ah, fatal luck.
CHANTICLEER (*turning at the sound*): Huh?
GRAY HEN (*despairingly, all her attention fixed on the interior of the cottage*): He speaks no more!
BLACKBIRD (*aside*): It is a half he's struck!
CHANTICLEER (*sternly, coming up behind her*):
You are not in the field?
GRAY HEN: My life's a wreck!
CHANTICLEER: What are you doing?
GRAY HEN: S . . . s . . . stretching out my neck!
CHANTICLEER: To see whom?
GRAY HEN (*greatly agitated*): Oh!
CHANTICLEER: Whom?
GRAY HEN: Oh!
CHANTICLEER: Confess!
GRAY HEN: The Cuckoo!
CHANTICLEER: No!
(*He is overcome*) You love him? Why?
GRAY HEN: A Swiss,—a foreign bird!
PATOU: Well, there you have it! That is bubble third.
GRAY HEN: He is a thinker. . . . Ah, I must succumb! . . .
CHANTICLEER: My rival is a patent pendulum.
THE GRAY HEN (*enthusiastically*):
He comes out just by rule, so much like Kant!
CHANTICLEER: Like what?
GRAY HEN: Like Kant.

CHANTICLEER: Can't what? Oh, I can't . . .
I cannot . . . stomach this. Be gone instanter.
BLACKBIRD:
Well, can't you hear? He's canned you. Can't you canter?
(GRAY HEN *scuttles away.*)
CHANTICLEER: The zany! When did my wife hear of Kant?
PATOU: At the Guinea's.
CHANTICLEER: That plaster beak with head aslant
Who cries, "Come back"?
PATOU: You see, she has a day.
CHANTICLEER: Another?
PATOU: Her own day, at home, "receives," they say.
CHANTICLEER: Receives what, where?
BLACKBIRD: Down in the kitchen garden.
PATOU: Where the straw man is set to act as warden.
CHANTICLEER: The scarecrow?
BLACKBIRD: Thanks to him, it's as select
As in a country place one could expect.
CHANTICLEER: Huh?
BLACKBIRD: Yes, he keeps the timid folk away,—
The poor relation and the country jay.
CHANTICLEER: The Guinea's day! They'll all be crazy soon!
The Guinea's day!
PATOU (*phlegmatically*): A bubble!
CHANTICLEER: A balloon!
BLACKBIRD (*imitating the* GUINEA'S *voice*): Mondays, at five.
CHANTICLEER: What do they do?
PATOU: No sense! Not a lick!
They cackle; turkey struts; the chickens . . . chick.
BLACKBIRD (*imitating the* GUINEA):
Mondays, from five to six. We try to keep
It most informal.
CHANTICLEER: Five! They ought to be asleep.
PATOU: She has 'em in the morning.
CHANTICLEER: What d'ye say?
BLACKBIRD: You see, at that hour, one has fullest sway;

The gardener's missing and the garden's free.
It has to be at five or not a Tea.

CHANTICLEER: It's perfect nonsense.

BLACKBIRD: Sure. It's utter rot.

PATOU: You needn't talk. You're always on the spot.

CHANTICLEER (*looking at the* BLACKBIRD): He goes there?

BLACKBIRD: Sure. I'm quite a toast I vow.

PATOU: I'm thinking . . .

CHANTICLEER: What are you grumbling in your collar now?

PATOU: Some pretty hen will take you there, some week.

CHANTICLEER: Me?

PATOU: You.

CHANTICLEER (*furious*): Me?

PATOU: Yes . . . she'll lead you by the beak!

CHANTICLEER: Who? Me? Who? Me?

PATOU: Yes, you, you fiery lover.
A tidy bill can always bowl you over.

BLACKBIRD (*imitating the Cock marching around a Hen*):
You turn about,
"Behold, 'tis I, my lass!"
And you go, "Co . . . "

CHANTICLEER: The bird's an utter ass!

THE BLACKBIRD (*keeping it up*): Your wing trails . . .

PATOU (*trembling and sniffing*): Big Jules hunts!

BLACKBIRD: That rouses Rover?

PATOU (*eyes shining, ears pricked up*):
Yes, that excites . . . No, . . . no, it don't . . . that's over.
(*Relaxing, he ends his speech in a muffled voice.*)

BLACKBIRD: Your heart is touched?

PATOU: Perhaps a mother bird . . .

BLACKBIRD: Eyes wet?

PATOU: Yes, sir.

BLACKBIRD: Old age, or cold? My word,
It's pure excess of . . . animality.
Cold in the head and warmth of heart! Tee-hee!

PATOU: My members war in me. I hear a shot;

And my retriever blood is on the spot.
An instant, lo, my watch-dog instinct wakes!
I see a trembling doe amid the brakes;
A rabbit darts, the chase is pressing hard;
And lo, awakes my soul of Saint Bernard!
(*Another shot is heard.*)

THE BLACKBIRD (*hiding behind the basket*): Another!

SCENE V

The Same. The GOLDEN PHEASANT; *a moment,* BRIFFAUT

A GOLDEN PHEASANT (*flying suddenly over the wall, falls exhausted in the court, crying*): Hide me!

CHANTICLEER: Heaven!

PATOU: A Golden Pheasant!

PHEASANT (*running toward* CHANTICLEER):
Not the great Chanticleer?

BLACKBIRD (*hidden behind the Basket*): He finds that pleasant!

THE GOLDEN PHEASANT (*running hither and thither*):
Save me, if you are he!

CHANTICLEER: Trust me!
(*Another shot is heard.*)

PHEASANT (*hiding behind* CHANTICLEER, *and giving a little shriek*): A . . . i . . . e! Another shock!

CHANTICLEER: Why, he's a nervous bird, this Pheasant Cock.

PHEASANT: I cannot fly another foot, kind sir.
(*The* PHEASANT *faints.*)

BLACKBIRD: Dramatic swoon! A very pretty stir!

CHANTICLEER (*who supports the* PHEASANT *with one wing*):
When his ruff falls, how beautiful he is!
Water! (*He runs to the drinking trough*) A shame to wet pure gold like this!
(*Nevertheless he spatters the* PHEASANT *vigorously with the other wing.*)

PHEASANT (*reviving*): I am pursued. Oh, hide me!

BLACKBIRD: Ten-twen-thirty!

(*To the Pheasant*)
How could they aim at you and never hurt ye?

PHEASANT (*fluttering wildly*):
From pure surprise. They thought they had a lark.
When I got up, they missed the shining mark.
I saw a flash; they saw a flare of gold.
The dog is on the trail. I hate an old . . .
(*seeing* PATOU, *quickly*):
I hate a *hunting* dog.
(*to* CHANTICLEER):
Oh, hide me, sir!

CHANTICLEER (*agitated*):
I will . . . and yet I can't . . . but how demur? . . .
Where hide this glowing thing?
Most noble stranger,
Where can one hide the rainbow when in danger?

PATOU: There, near the beehives, where the vines have grown,
Is my green cottage, where I live alone.
Take it, and welcome.
(*The* PHEASANT *darts in; but the long tail feathers show outside.*)

PATOU (*continues*): Huh, these showy clothes
Are ill to hide.
(*He sits down in front of his kennel, on the long feathers, and pretends to be eating out of his pan.*)
Best sit here, I suppose.
(*Enter* BRIFFAUT, *under the wall; ears flopping, jaws dripping.*)

PATOU (*trying to seem unconcerned*): Good day.

BRIFFAUT (*sniffing*): Something smells good.

PATOU (*modestly, showing his pan*): My cottage soup, perhaps.

BRIFFAUT: 'Ve you seen a pheasant hen?

PATOU (*surprised, reflective*): Pheasant?

CHANTICLEER (*walking up and down, with forced gaiety*):
Of all fierce chaps!
Good form, that English air, no use denying.

PATOU: A pheasant cock? . . . Why yes, I saw one flying.
BRIFFAUT: That's she!
PATOU: The pheasant hen's a Cinderella.
This was a golden bird, a splendid fellow.
BRIFFAUT: That's she all right.
CHANTICLEER (*coming nearer, incredulous*):
A golden Pheasant Hen?
BRIFFAUT: You didn't know that happens now and then?
CHANTICLEER *and* PATOU: No!
BLACKBIRD: Take it from me, he's drawing the long bow.
BRIFFAUT: It *is* exceptional. It happens, though.
My master read . . . extraordinary thing . . .
Happens with grouse, too . . .
BLACKBIRD: Let him have his fling . . .
Go on from "happens!" . . .
PATOU (*impatiently*): What?
BRIFFAUT: Occurs, my friends . . .
CHANTICLEER (*scratching the ground*): What?
BRIFFAUT: Shall we say the male bird sometimes lends . . .
Or, rather, let us say the hen admires
His gay spring garb, and of a sudden tires
Of sitting, drably dressed. She hotly yearns
For gold and purple. Nature then returns
Her colours, and, a splendid Amazon,
She spreads her wings, all golden, to the sun,
Preferring freedom and her colours gay
To chirping nestlings under wings of gray.
In brief, renounces all hen virtues steady . . .
CHANTICLEER (*abruptly*): What's that to you?
BRIFFAUT (*taken aback*): I vex you? What?
PATOU (*aside*): Already!
CHANTICLEER: In brief this bird at which your master shot . . .
BRIFFAUT: Was a hen pheasant.
(*He begins to sniff again.*)
PATOU (*showing his empty pan*): Sorry. The last I've got.
BRIFFAUT: Smells good.

CHANTICLEER (*aside*): I do not like that nosing!
BRIFFAUT: Fancy!
One day . . .
BLACKBIRD: Another yarn!
(*A whistle is heard.*)
CHANTICLEER (*to* BRIFFAUT): Your master wants ye.
BRIFFAUT: Worse luck! Good day.
(*He disappears.*)
PATOU: Good-bye.
CHANTICLEER: He's gone at last!
BLACKBIRD (*calling*): Briffaut!
CHANTICLEER: What in the mischief . . .
BLACKBIRD: Not so fast!
BRIFFAUT (*his head reappearing under the wall*): Well, sir?
BLACKBIRD: Take care!
CHANTICLEER (*in an angry aside to* BLACKBIRD):
Be careful what you try on!
BLACKBIRD (*to* BRIFFAUT): You'll lose . . .
BRIFFAUT: Well, what?
BLACKBIRD: Your jaw, unless it's made of iron.
BRIFFAUT (*disappearing with a snort of rage*): Hon! . . .

SCENE VI

CHANTICLEER, BLACKBIRD, PATOU, PHEASANT HEN, *the* CAT, *still sleeping on the wall, the* OLD HEN *in her basket*

CHANTICLEER (*to the* BLACKBIRD, *after an interval, for the* BLACKBIRD *has climbed into his cage again and is looking over the wall*): He's gone?
BLACKBIRD: Clean gone.
CHANTICLEER (*going toward the kennel*):
You can come out, dear Lady.
THE PHEASANT HEN (*appearing on the threshold of the kennel*): Rebellious and enfranchised,—truly said he!
Daughter of kings, gold-robed, beyond a doubt,

Yet pheasant of the woods.
(*She comes out with a bound.*)

BLACKBIRD: She's branching out!

PHEASANT: My home, the forest; hunted there . . .

CHANTICLEER: O fool,
Who'd chase a jewel with a leaden tool!

PHEASANT HEN:
Under the brushwood where the sunshine sifts,
I live. But whence came I, whence came my gifts?
From Persia, India, China, who can say?
I am born to be the prism for the ray
Of sun that turns the arrar tree to fire,
And not to hide from poachers in a brier!
Am I Kin Ky? Or Pheonix? There's no voice!
Yet Fable leaves to me a splendid choice,
And I have chosen Colchis for my home.
Upon the wrist of Jason have I come.
A bird of gold, I am the Golden Fleece!

PATOU: Who? you?

PHEASANT: The Pheasant!

PATOU: You mean, the Pheasant Hen.

PHEASANT: Ah, peace!
I represent my race, I bear its shield
Of purple. Too long I have laid concealed,
A dead leaf near a ruby. Far too pale
I found that fate, and taking from the male
His glittering hues, at last came to my own.
I gave them glories they had never known.
This ruff of gold, these epaulettes of green,
This purple corslet, have a finer sheen,
A livelier lustre on my frailer form.
I made a toilet of a uniform!

CHANTICLEER: Ah, she is dazzling!

PATOU (*growling to himself*): It's enough to choke us!
He's fell in love with this here hocus-pocus!

BLACKBIRD (*coming down and turning a somersault*):

I've got to see the Guinea Hen this minute!
She'll have a fit! The old set won't be in it
She must invite her.
(*To* CHANTICLEER) Well, ta-ta, I'm gone.

CHANTICLEER (*to the* PHEASANT):
You come then from the East, whence comes the Dawn?

PHEASANT: My life is full of picturesque disorder,
—If from the East, from the Bohemian border.

PATOU (*aside, heart-broken*): A gypsy! Wow!

PHEASANT (*to* CHANTICLEER, *making her ruff show its irridescent lights*): Have you remarked these colors? I alone
Share with Aurora this bronze-golden tone.
Princess of brushwood, Empress of the glade!
—Adventuresses all affect this shade,
This yellow crest! My moving palace shakes,
Built of the flags that quiver near the lakes.
I adore the forest. In September days
It smells of dead, dry wood . . .

PATOU (*in consternation*): What *is* her craze?

PHEASANT: Mad as a twig caught up by a sirocco,
I flit, I tremble, am beside myself . . .

CHANTICLEER (*who has begun to trail one wing, turns slowly around, as the* BLACKBIRD *has done only a little while ago, in imitating him, and makes in his throat very softly the sound*): Co . . . a . . . co . . .
(*The* PHEASANT HEN *looks at him. Feeling himself encouraged, he begins a bit louder*): Co . . .

PHEASANT: Sir, let me tell you if you act that way
For my sake . . .

CHANTICLEER (*stopping*): What?

PHEASANT: The eye, the turn, the play
Of trailing wing, the "Co!"

CHANTICLEER: But I . . .

PHEASANT HEN: The whole effect,
Is very good,—but one which I reject.

CHANTICLEER (*rather crestfallen*): Madam . . .

PHEASANT: I understand. It is the Cock,
And all the farmyard,—yes, the whole Hen Flock,
Lives in the hope, a touching one, dear knows,
Of winning just a glance between two crows.
A cock so confident he cannot rest
Till he has made a conquest of a guest,
A stranger,—not a short-gowned hen, low-born,
Who runs to clucking as she runs to corn.

CHANTICLEER: But . . .

PHEASANT: I'm not susceptible; I'm not demure,
And for my taste, the Cock is too cocksure.

CHANTICLEER: Cocksure?

PHEASANT: And spoiled. The only mate I'd own
Would love, not glory, but myself alone.

CHANTICLEER: But . . .

PHEASANT: Love a great Cock,—I am not such a hen!

CHANTICLEER (*after a little pause*):
But . . . Madam . . . let . . . let us go walking, then!

PHEASANT: Yes, like good comrades.

CHANTICLEER: Comrades.

PHEASANT: Pair of chickens.

CHANTICLEER: Very old friends.

PHEASANT: Not *old,* that word quite sickens,—
Plain friends.

CHANTICLEER (*coming nearer*):
Surely, not plain! Pray, will you take my wing?
And see the court?

PHEASANT: Pray show me everything.

CHANTICLEER (*stopping by the patent trough*):
A bad invention! Chickens can't rely on
Sterilized water in a trough of iron;
But all the rest, familiar, fair and good,
The dove cote's thatch, the door of oaken wood . . .

BLACKBIRD (*reëntering, aside*):
The Guinea's throwing fits to beat the band!

ALL—ALL IS POSSIBLE IF ALL IS LOVE!

PHEASANT: You lead a quiet life. On every hand
Tranquillity.
CHANTICLEER: All on the safest plan.
The Master is a Vegetarian.
He loves his animals and gives them names,
Out of his books,—he's always playing games!
The ass is Midas. Io is the cow.
BLACKBIRD (*watching them*):
We're playing we're the landed gentry, now!
PHEASANT (*indicating the* BLACKBIRD): And this?
CHANTICLEER: Our local wit.
PHEASANT: What does he do?
CHANTICLEER: Keeps busy . . .
PHEASANT: How?
CHANTICLEER: Seeing both sides. It makes him rather dizzy.
Very hard work.
PHEASANT: Naughty, he seems to me.
BLACKBIRD (*casting a glance at the* PHEASANT'S *scarlet plastron*):
She's nabbed his Nibs, that's very plain to see.
CHANTICLEER (*continuing the tour of the yard*):
The hayrick. The old wall. Here, when I crow,
The lizards swarm; the hayrick leaning, so.
Here's where I scratch before the crow's begun,
And from this pan I drink when it is done.
PHEASANT (*smiling*): Your crow then has importance?
CHANTICLEER (*gravely*): Very great.
PHEASANT: Why?
CHANTICLEER: That's my secret.
PHEASANT: Tell me . . . this affair of state.
CHANTICLEER (*changing the subject, points to a bundle of sticks in the corner*): My friends, the faggots.
PHEASANT: Taken from my wood! . . .
Then it is true, as I have understood
You have a secret?
CHANTICLEER (*briefly*): Yes.

PHEASANT: I coax in vain?
CHANTICLEER (*climbing on the wall at the end of the yard*):
From here, you see the rest of my domain,—
The kitchen garden where at twilight crawls
A serpent from whose head a fountain falls.
PHEASANT: And this is all?
CHANTICLEER: That's all.
PHEASANT: And do you think
That barrowful of kale, earth's outer brink?
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT: Has not your fancy followed where they led
When the wild geese sweep northward overhead?
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT: But all these things are workaday and dull.
CHANTICLEER: I find them every day more beautiful.
PHEASANT: Day after day the same!
CHANTICLEER: No single one
Is ever twice the same,—beneath the sun.
She makes all new!
PHEASANT: She? Who?
CHANTICLEER: The Living Light!
The housewife's red geranium, crimson-bright,
Glows still, and changes still. The wooden shoe,
Bulging with straw, is beautiful and new.
The wooden rake, the overalls beneath,
That holds dead grasses still between its teeth!
The pitchfork, like an urchin in disgrace,
Stands in the corner, upright in his place,
And dreams of harvest! Skittles, scarlet-gowned
That good old Patou rolls upon the ground!
The wooden basin, rotted half away,
Round which an ant keeps travelling every day,
Making the trip,—so our globe trotter reckons,
Around the rim, with luck, in eighty seconds!
I tell you, none of these is twice the same.
And as for me, my heart is all aflame

With ecstasy of praises for the power
That gilds a pitchfork and perfects a flower.
I gazed upon the bind-weed on the ground,
And admiration made my eyes so round!

PHEASANT: One sees you have a soul. But . . . such a soul
Can rest content, far from life's stress and dole
Behind a barnyard fence where pussy sleeps?

CHANTICLEER:

One knows life when one looks and laughs and weeps.
All tragedy is where an insect dies;
And through a knot-hole one can see the skies.

THE OLD HEN (*bobbing up*):

Nobody knows the stars like clear well water.

CHANTICLEER (*introducing her before the cover falls*):

My foster mother.

OLD HEN (*slyly*): Ain't he handsome, daughter?

PHEASANT (*going toward the* OLD HEN):

A Cock, whose vision is his own salvation.

CHANTICLEER (*going toward* PATOU):

With such a hen, one can have conversation.

(*One hears without piercing cries and a clack that approaches rapidly.*)

SCENE VII

The Same; the GUINEA HEN *and all the Poultry Yard*

(*Cries without, coming nearer*): Ah!

THE BLACKBIRD (*in his cage*): Enter the Pot-a-rack!

(*All the Poultry enter tumultuously, led by the* GUINEA HEN, *much excited.*)

GUINEA (*running up to the* PHEASANT):

Good luck! Ah, Madam, you have gotten back.
How beautiful she is.—I flew to meet you.
I want to know you better. I entreat you . . .
(*General chorus of admiration*): Ahh!
(*They circle round the* PHEASANT, *conversation, squawks, cackling.*)

CHANTICLEER (*aside, looking at the* PHEASANT):
—How well she walks!
(*Looks at his hens*) You hens, there! oh bend your legs!
Goodness! You walk as if you trod on eggs.
PATOU: He's dead in love. Just listen to him mutter.
GUINEA (*presenting the* YOUNG GUINEA): Madam, my son.
YOUNG GUINEA (*admiringly*): Her hair's as blonde as . . .
A HEN (*in a stage whisper*): Butter.
CHANTICLEER (*turning abruptly to the Hens*): To roost!
PHEASANT (*politely regretful*): Already?
CHANTICLEER: Yes, they keep early hours.
(*The Hens begin to mount the ladder into the Hen House.*)
A HEN (*a little mortified and cross*): We have to go to roost!
PHEASANT: A staircase to their bowers!
Shut in like that, I couldn't sleep a wink.
GUINEA HEN: My dear, there's an affinity, I think.
CHANTICLEER (*looking at the* PHEASANT):
How well she fits her clothes; gives them an air.
They might as well wear smocks, those others there.
PHEASANT (*excusing herself to the* GUINEA HEN):
This evening I must seek my woods again.
GUINEA (*desolated*): Really?
(*A shot is heard.*)
PATOU: They're hunting still.
GUINEA: You must remain.
CHANTICLEER (*earnestly*):
Yes, we must keep her prisoner for to-night.
PHEASANT: Where could I sleep?
PATOU: The kennel is all right.
PHEASANT: Under a roof?
PATOU (*urgently*): Go in.
PHEASANT: But you, then?
PATOU: I?
Oh, I was made to sleep beneath the sky.
THE PHEASANT (*resigning herself*): Well, till to-morrow.
GUINEA (*screaming out*): Oh, to-morrow, say!

EVERYBODY (*startled*): To-morrow, what?
YOUNG GUINEA: Why, that is Mother's "day."
GUINEA (*gushingly to* PHEASANT):
Oh, won't you, dear? Ah, most informally,
Come in, . . . Monday, . . . at five . . . a little tea?
The Peacock . . .
CHANTICLEER (*climbing the ladder to inspect*):
Twilight mirk comes on apace.
(*In a tone of command*):
Is every one in his accustomed place?
GUINEA (*below, to the* PHEASANT):
Peacock will come. It's by the currant bushes.
CHANTICLEER: The turkeys on their perch?
GUINEA: I hate these crushes,
Where one meets *everybody*.
CHANTICLEER: Ducks all covered?
GUINEA: Perhaps the Tortoise . . .
PHEASANT (*politely*): Really?
CHANTICLEER (*who has reached the highest rung of the ladder*):
Are the chicks all hovered?
YOUNG GUINEA (*sarcastically*): A cry for every rung?
CHANTICLEER (*to* YOUNG GUINEA): Yes, it behooves . . .
(*to the* FLOCK): Everything safe?
(*to the* YOUNG GUINEA): To care for what one loves.
To do one's duty on the humblest ladder.
GUINEA (*still urging the* PHEASANT):
The Houdan promises,—to make us gladder,—
The Cock!
(*To* CHANTICLEER, *gushingly*): We're thrilled!
CHANTICLEER: But . . .
THE HOUDAN (*putting her head out of the Hen House dictatorially*): You will go.
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT (*at the foot of the ladder looking at him*): Yes.
CHANTICLEER: But why?
PHEASANT: Because you told the other, no.

CHANTICLEER: Ah?
PATOU: Hon!
PHEASANT (*earnestly*): Oh, I beg of you . . .
CHANTICLEER: Why, really, I . . .
PATOU: Huh! She could make him crow and not half try!
THE OLD HEN (*appearing*): *You make a whistle from a reed.*
(*The cover falls. Little by little night comes.*)
CHANTICLEER: I . . . really . . . I . . . indeed . . .
A VOICE: Let's go to sleep.
TURKEY: *Quandoque dormitat . . .*
BLACKBIRD: Good lullaby.
CHANTICLEER (*very firmly*): I will not go. Good night.
PHEASANT (*rather vexed*): Good night.
(*She enters the kennel with a bound. The twilight deepens to dark blue.*)
PATOU (*sleepily, lying in front of his kennel*):
We'll sleep until the eastern sky is bright . . .
All rosy pink as . . . as . . . Oh, yes, I tell ye . . .
As rosy as a little puppy's belly.
GUINEA HEN (*going to sleep*):
Come back . . . from five to six . . .
BLACKBIRD (*half asleep*): Tu tu, tu tu . . .
CHANTICLEER (*still high on the ladder*): All fast asleep?
(*He sees a chick creeping out*)
A chick sneaks out! Hey, you!
(*He hurries after him and drives him back, precipitately.*)
You would, would you?
(*The chick scrambles back to his place. In chasing him,* CHANTICLEER *comes close to the kennel. He calls very softly*): Pheasant! Pheasant Hen?
PHEASANT (*lost in the straw, in a dreamy voice*): What?
CHANTICLEER: Nothing . . .
(*He hesitates, and then with a sigh*): Nothing.
(*He regretfully mounts his ladder.*)
PHEASANT: I am dreaming, then.
PATOU (*unmistakably asleep*): Bell . . . Y.

PHEASANT: Under a roof . . . I'm too Bo . . . he . . .
CHANTICLEER (*sleepily*):
To roost (*one hears him speaking in a sleepy voice*)
To roost. It's fully time for me. . . .
PHEASANT (*with a last, sleepy effort*):
Bo . . . he . . . mi . . . an . . .
(*Her head is lifted for a moment, droops and disappears in the straw.*)
VOICE OF CHANTICLEER (*almost asleep*):
. . . to close my eyes.
(*Silence. He sleeps.*)
(*In the darkness two big green eyes shine out on the wall.*)
THE CAT: To let mine shine!
(*On the barn roof two yellow eyes shine out.*)
A VOICE: And open mine!
(*Two more yellow eyes shine out.*)
A VOICE: And mine!
(*Two more yellow eyes shine out*) And mine!
(*The outlines of three barn owls can be dimly seen.*)

SCENE VIII

The Poultry Yard sleeps; the CAT *wakes on the wall; three* BARN OWLS, *later the* MOLE, *and the voice of the* CUCKOO

AN OWL: Two green eyes!
THE CAT (*stretching herself on the wall and looking at the other phosphorescent eyes*): Six yellow eyes!
OWL: On the wall!
CAT: On the barn!
OWL: Tabby!
CAT: Hoot-owl!
THE THREE OWLS: Cat!
CAT: Hoot!
ONE OF THE OWLS: Miaul!
BLACKBIRD (*waking*): What's this I hear?
FIRST OWL (*to the* CAT): To-wit; conspiracy!

THE CAT: To-night?
THE THREE OWLS: Yes. Who-oo? Who?
THE CAT (*joyfully*): Psfft! Where?
OWLS (*together*): To-wit: the yew tree close to the holly tree!
CAT: What is the hour? Miaw! The hour of fate?
OWLS: To-wit, to-wit; at eight, at eight, at eight.
(*Zigzagging of bats in the air.*)
Blind Bats of night that juggle in the dark . . .
THE CAT: They're with us?
OWLS: Yes.
FIRST OWL: That's the Mole scratching. Hark!
THE CAT: Is she with us?
OWLS: Yes.
CAT (*speaking toward the door of the lodge*):
Hasten thy tic-toc.
And speed the hour of eight, O cuckoo clock!
FIRST OWL: He's for us?
THE CAT: Yes. And certain birds of light
Dark, silent watchers, share the thoughts of Night.
TURKEY (*from the centre of a furtive group of Poultry that has feigned sleep*): This evening, dear round eyes, you go?
THE OWLS: We go!
FIRST OWL: There meet all round eyes from above, below.
BLACKBIRD: I'd like to see that.
PATOU (*growling in his dreams*): Rrrrrr . . .
THE CAT (*reassuring the Night Birds*):
He's grumbling in his sleep.
CHANTICLEER (*within*): Co . . .
THE OWLS (*in a panic*): Who? Who? Who? 'Tis he.
TURKEY: Fly!
FIRST OWL: Nay, the night is deep.
We disappear if we but close our eyes.
(*All the eyes are closed. Black darkness.*)
CHANTICLEER (*appearing at the top of his ladder*):
Blackbird, did you hear something?
BLACKBIRD: Yes, get wise!

OWLS (*frightened*): To whoo?
BLACKBIRD: Tremble!
A somber plot!
CHANTICLEER: Ah!
BLACKBIRD (*melodramatically*): Against you!
CHANTICLEER (*reassured*): Joker!
(*He goes back.*)
OWLS (*opening their eyes*): He's gone!
BLACKBIRD (*satisfied*): I dissemble,
Yet none's betrayed. So . . . I am true.
AN OWL: You are for us? . . .
BLACKBIRD: N . . . no. . . . Say, may I come, too?
AN OWL: No Night Bird eats a blackbird; they aren't seen,
So you may come.
BLACKBIRD: The password?
OWLS: Shadow and rapine!
PHEASANT (*sticking her head out of the kennel*):
I smother in this house. I fight for breath,
And
(*She sees the Night Birds*): Oh! . . .
(*She draws her head back quietly but lies watching.*)
OWLS: Hush!
(*They close their eyes. All is still. They reopen them.*)
Naught! Let's go!
A VOICE (*from the Group of Poultry*): Luck, birds of death!
THE OWL: Thank you, but why?
CAT: Night tells, what Day would hide:
I hate the Cock,—the dog is on his side!
THE TURKEY: I hate the Cock, I, Gobbler *propter hoc.*
I knew him as cockerel, deny him as Cock.
THE DUCK: I hate him; he has no web between his toes,
And so he traces stars where'er he goes.
A CHICKEN: I hate the Cock because I am so plain.
ANOTHER: I hate the Cock because he is so vain.
One finds his spur on every violet.

ANOTHER: His statue on the highest roofs is set
As weather-vane, still chip of the old block.
AN OWL (*to a big Chicken*): And you, good Capon?
CAPON (*surlily*): I do not like the Cock.
THE CUCKOO (*beginning to strike eight, inside the house*):
Cuckoo!
FIRST OWL: The hour!
CUCKOO (*in clock*): Cuckoo! cuckoo!
SECOND OWL: O hark!
CLOCK: Cuckoo!
(*A pale ray illumines all one side of the Poultry Yard.*)
FIRST OWL: The moon!
CUCKOO: Cuckoo!
FIRST OWL (*spreading his wings*): We cleave the dark.
THE CUCKOO: Cuckoo!
THE MOLE (*her head showing at the door of her hill*):
The dank brown earth . . .
FIRST OWL: To-wit: the Mole?
Now teli us why you hate him, dusty soul?
THE MOLE: Because I never saw him!
CUCKOO IN THE CLOCK: Cuckoo!
FIRST OWL (*to the* CUCKOO): You hate him, on what ground?
CUCKOO CLOCK (*striking the last count*):
He strikes although he's never wound.
Cuckoo!
FIRST OWL: We do not love . . .
SECOND OWL (*hurriedly to his companions*):
They will get our bough!
ALL (*opening their wings*): We hate the Cock . . .
(*They fly off. Silence.*)
THE PHEASANT (*coming slowly out of the kennel*):
I almost love him, now.

(*Curtain*)

ACT II

THE MORNING OF THE COCK

THE SETTING

A group of holly trees. A garden old;
A sad place when at night the hawkweed bends
Beside the nettle by the path none tends;
But when the dawn kindles the east to gold

The glories of my Valley so unfold
For the sad night it makes complete amends.
Under no alien sun her river rolls;
The arms of France her gracious curves enfold.

Horizon calm, that bounds desire,—not dreams;
Slim poplars. Gentle range. How strong it seems
Lifting a village from the slope below.

The skies are skies of home. A wreath of smoke
Drifts from the chimney of some simple folk.
It is the pipe, one whispers, of Corot.

SCENE I

(*The Night Birds of all sizes and kinds form a huge circle, establishing themselves on the rocks, the brambles and the limbs of the holly trees; the* CAT *crouches in the grass; the* BLACKBIRD *perches on a bit of dead wood. As the curtain rises there is deep darkness. All the Night Birds are motionless, darkly-shadowed outlines, eyes closed. The* GREAT HORNED OWL, *perched on a tree trunk, presides. The* BARN OWL *only has his great yellow eyes open. He proceeds to the roll-call, and at every name one sees two great round yellow eyes shine out through the darkness.*)

THE BARN OWL (*calling*): Strix!

(*Two eyes shine out.*) Scops!

(*Two eyes shine out.*) Hoot Owl!

(*Two eyes shine out.*) Screech Owl!

(*Two eyes shine out.*)

ONE NIGHT BIRD (*to another*): Grand Duke's presiding.

BARN OWL (*continuing the roll-call*):

Owl of the Yew! The Belfrey! And the Wood! Wherever hiding.

(*At each name two yellow eyes shine out.*)

ONE NIGHT BIRD (*to a newcomer*): The roll-call!

THE OTHER: Yes, I know. I'm glad I came.

Your eyes must open when they call your name.

THE BARN OWL: Surnia! Wood Owl! Nyctate!

(*The three pairs of eyes open simultaneously.*)

Brachyote! (*No eyes appear.*)

BARN OWL (*repeats*): Brachyote?

A NIGHT BIRD: One minute!

They say Brachyote delayed to kill a linnet.

BRACHYOTE (*arriving*): Here!

BARN OWL: They all turn out when talk is of the Cock.
ALL THE NIGHT BIRDS (*with one voice*): All!
BARN OWL: Hulotte!
(*Two eyes shine out.*) Caparacoch!
(*No eyes open.*)
BARN OWL (*insistently*): Ca-pa-ra-coch?
—Ah, well, at last!
CAPARACOCH (*breathless, opens his eyes and apologizes*):
I live so far away!
BARN OWL (*drily*): Some birds fly fast.
(*He looks about him.*) I think that all are here!
(*Calling.*) Cheveche! Chevette!
(*Now all the eyes are open.*)
THE GREAT HORNED OWL (*solemnly*): Begin aright
Giving the Cry that makes us all as one!
ALL: Long live the Night!
(*Repressed, mysterious, fierce, accompanied with beating of wings and long cries into the night, one birds calls to another with ferocious gestures.*)
THE GREAT HORNED OWL: Live the Night and her Dominion!
Forth we fare on muted pinion,
Soft as breath,
That the partridge in her cover
Hear not, dream not, poised above her
Shadowy Death.
THE BARN OWL: Live the Night that keeps me stranger
Both to honor and to danger!
Forth I flop,
No one seeing, no one knowing,
Till the rabbit's blood is flowing
Drop by drop.
AN OLD OWL: Live the Shadows as they darken!
AN OWLET: Silences whence all may hearken
Craunching jaws!
SCREECH OWL: Coolness that each feather tickles,

While blood-warm the crimson trickles
Through our claws.

ANOTHER: Live the Rock whence Terror oozes!

ANOTHER (*giving his cry*): Graveyard guide-posts Horror chooses.

THE BARN OWL: To whoot with might.

CHURCH OWL: And miaul.

OWLET: Ulule!

SCREECH OWL: And screech! and whine!

THE GREAT HORNED OWL: Till infidels would make the Sign!

ALL: Long live the Night!

GREAT HORNED OWL: Live the deadly fogs entwining,
Fogs, that dull the stars' sharp shining,—
The Night's one blot.

THE BARN OWL: When our sharpened claws contract
And the rat's light bones are cracked
We need them not.

GREAT HORNED OWL: Live the Night to vengeance given!
When the tom-tit's heart is riven
For his graces!
Darkness is at war with Beauty.
Rive and rend, our dearest duty,
In all places.

THE OWLET: Night,—that makes all beggars choosers!

THE GREAT HORNED OWL: Birds of Prey are never losers.
Night besmirches; . . .
But the jay has lost no brightness,
Nor the mourning doves their whiteness
On their perches.

A SCREECH OWL: Live the hour when, egg-shells crushing,
Down our thirsty throats go rushing
Hopes parental.

A BARN OWL: Hour when, all as one conspiring,
That deed seem which we're desiring
Accidental.

GREAT HORNED OWL: Live the Shadow, sire of Terror!
Leaving earth to us and Error.

THE BARN OWL: To whoot with might!
THE CHURCH OWL: And miaul!
ALL THE SCREECH OWLS: And screech!
ALL THE WOOD OWLS: Ulule!
THE GREAT HORNED OWL: For then
The Eagle's heart is like the Wren!
ALL: Long live the Night!
THE GREAT HORNED OWL: Now let us hear with solemn unction
The Barn Owl speak!
SEVERAL VOICES: 'Sh!
THE BLACKBIRD (*on his faggot*): Charming function!
THE BARN OWL (*oratorically*): My fellow Night Birds!
THE GREAT HORNED OWL (*to his neighbor*):
This appeals to me,
The darkest corner and the mouldiest tree,
The empty flower pots, there, upon the right,
Beyond the hollies. . . .
ALL THE NIGHT BIRDS: Whoo? Whoo?
GREAT HORNED OWL: Gloom and all delight.
THE BARN OWL: Night Birds!
AN OLD OWL (*suddenly*):
The Mole. How far she had to climb!
ANOTHER OWL: Beneath the thyme, she bored.
THE BLACKBIRD (*hopping*): Subway,—behind thyme!
THE GREAT HORNED OWL (*to his neighbor*):
Is it the Blackbird?
BLACKBIRD (*coming forward*): Yes, your Grace, and that—
That pair of agates yonder, is the Cat.
GREAT HORNED OWL: I know, I hear her lick her padded paws.
BARN OWL (*continuing his speech*):
Fellow Night Birds, fellows by all the laws,
That bind—I say, that make,—that form, a tie
Among all creatures of the Evil Eye,—
ALL THE NIGHT BIRDS (*cackling and swaying after their fashion*): Ha! Ha!

GREAT HORNED OWL (*opening his wings to enforce order*):
Be silent!
BLACKBIRD: Here, I've got a squint
But not an evil eye. That's just a hint.
I take no part!
AN OWL: Then really he takes ours.
BLACKBIRD (*aside*): I do not envy him his mental powers.
BARN OWL (*continuing*):
Come! With malevolence that naught conceals,
Declare the Cock a thief!
ALL: A thief! He steals!
THE BLACKBIRD: Steals what?
THE GREAT HORNED OWL: Our health and our delight.
BLACKBIRD: What are you giving me? How?
BARN OWL: He steals the Night!
THE GREAT HORNED OWL:
He gives us, by his song, attacks of spleen
And heart-disease, announcing . . .
THE BLACKBIRD (*hopping*): Oh, you mean
The light!
(*General movement of anger. The* BLACKBIRD, *terrified, hides behind some faggots.*)
GREAT HORNED OWL:
Don't speak that word! Don't speak that word.
Night trembles when its hateful sound is heard!
BLACKBIRD (*prudently, correcting himself*): I mean the Dawn!
(*Same general movement.*)
THE OWLET (*hurriedly*): An evil word to hatch!
It grates as grates the striking of a match!
THE BARN OWL:
Say "he announces . . . folding the dark cloth."
BLACKBIRD: But daylight . . .
ALL (*same movement; cries of agony*):
Oh, not that. It makes us wroth!
GREAT HORNED OWL: Say "what will come."

BLACKBIRD: Why is the Cock so scolded
Because . . .
ALL (*checking him*): To-wit:
BLACKBIRD (*cautiously*): To-wit, the cloth is folded . . .
Since—what will come . . . will come!
THE GREAT HORNED OWL:
It tortures us. Our very claws grow numb
Hearing his bright . . .
BLACKBIRD (*flippantly*): His dark
GREAT HORNED OWL: His brazen song,
Recalling that the night can not be long.
ALL (*wracked with grief*): Not long . . . not long!
GREAT HORNED OWL:
He crows while yet the gracious night is black.
CRIES (*from all sides*): A thief! A thief!
GREAT HORNED OWL: His singing holds us back
From profit!
ALL: Prophet! Prophet!
GREAT HORNED OWL: From what is left!
Just at the burrow we must stop, bereft . . .
BARN OWL: Of bloody feasts.
OWLET: And witches' midnight meeting,—
Upon a wizard's fist all darkness greeting.
THE GREAT HORNED OWL:
When he has crowed, we lose our normal state.
BARN OWL: An evil thing to hasten!
GREAT HORNED OWL: Hence our hate!
LONG-EARED OWL:
When he has crowed, our reign of death is waning!
SCREECH OWL:
Upon the dark . . . that which we fear—is gaining!
BARN OWL: When his clear call has torn the Night apart,
We writhe like maggots in an apple's heart.
THE BLACKBIRD (*entirely bewildered, from his faggot*):
But other cocks . . .

GREAT HORNED OWL: They put no night to rout.
His song alone we must . . .
ALL THE NIGHT BIRDS (*flapping their wings*): Put out! Put out!
AN OWL: How shall we do it?
BARN OWL (*indicating the* BLACKBIRD): He has done his part.
BLACKBIRD: Who? Me?
BARN OWL: You mock him.
ALL (*chuckling and rocking*): Ha! Ha!
GREAT HORNED OWL (*opening his wings*): Hush!
(*They resume their sinister immobility.*)
BARN OWL: It made him smart,
And yet his song our very blood can chill.
He is too strong for ridicule to kill.
ALL: How shall we do it?
BARN OWL: The Peacock, painted clown . . .
ALL (*chuckling and rocking*): Ha-ha!
GREAT HORNED OWL (*opening his wings*): Silence!
(*Immobility once more.*)
BARN OWL: He works against him, and he cries him down.
He's less the fashion, but his crow is surer.
Become less popular, his song is purer.
ALL: How is it to be done?
A SCREECH OWL: Strangle the Cock!
CRIES: Death to the Cock!
LONG-EARED OWL: Aristocrat, who plays the demigogue.
ANOTHER: While wearing spurs, he wears a bonnet red.
GREAT HORNED OWL: All Night Birds rise!
(*All seem to grow larger; wings wide open, eyes rounder; the night seems to deepen.*)
BLACKBIRD (*unawed and mocking*): Night's coming to a head.
THE BARN OWL:
Strangle him? How? We're blind when he comes out!
ALL (*groaning*): Alas!
A LONG-EARED OWL (*cautiously*): Let's do it from a distance.
GREAT HORNED OWL: Wise no doubt,
But most impracticable.

A Voice (*from a branch*): Chairman, I say!
May I explain my plan?
Great Horned Owl: Scops-eared, you may.
All (*seeing a small Owl flop from a branch and come forward*):
Scops! little Scops!
Scops (*bowing to the* Great Horned Owl):
You know, great Nyctalope,
There lives, beyond the garden, on yon slope,
A birds' school-teacher, . . . avi-cult-u-rer, . . .
Who raises for the fairs, . . . or some prefer
To call 'em poultry shows, . . . in various places,
The finest game cocks, of the foolest races.
The Peacock, great discoverer of freaks,—
(Rending the eardrum with his endless shrieks
He cannot bear a Song that rends the dark,—)
This bird, who seeks out all new birds of mark,
Any new creature, strange . . .
Great Horned Owl (*to his neighbor*): Or, better, stranger . . .
Scops (*continuing*): Hopes to present,—thus hoping to endanger
Chanticleer's vogue, . . . Monday, at five . . .
All (*laughing*): The Guinea's day!
Scops: All these fine birds, whose glories as they say
Will quite eclipse the Cock.
Blackbird (*hopping*): 'Twill knock him flat!
The Great Horned Owl:
These Cocks are locked in, always. What of that?
Scops: This evening, sir, when all the Cocks were out
To peck the corn a servant flung about
Like golden hail,—forth from a tree I flop
Scaring the girl . . .
An Owl (*to his neighbor*): A crafty bird, this Scops!
Scops: Seeing a bird, you know, of evil omen
Is too much for the courage of a woman.
All (*chuckling and swaying*): Ha! Ha!
Great Horned Owl (*opening his wings*): Be still!
(*Immobility again.*)

She fled, her arms before her face!
The coop is open. All about the place
The birds are straying, and the fancy ninnies
Will meet the Cock, to-morrow, at . . .

ALL (*choking with laughter*): The Guinea's.

BLACKBIRD: He won't be there. He says . . .

SCOPS: Oh, curse him? Is that true?

THE CAT (*phlegmatically*): Go on. He'll be there.

BLACKBIRD (*looking at the* CAT *from a safe distance*):
Tiger, who told you?

THE CAT: I've seen a bird that makes him trail his wing.
He'll be there.

BLACKBIRD: When you're asleep you do not miss a thing.

GREAT HORNED OWL: Granted, he'll go. Then . . . ?

SCOPS: Chanticleer, you see,
Though famous, is a country bird, and he
Seeing this . . .

BLACKBIRD (*whistling the word*): Five o'clock . . .

SCOPS: And all the airs
Of all the

BLACKBIRD (*whistling*): Snobs . . .

SCOPS: Will try, . . . I think he dares . . .
To show this

BLACKBIRD (*whistling*): Minstrel show . . .

SCOPS: A thing or two.

THE GREAT HORNED OWL (*trembling with excitement*):
You think . . . a cock fight?

SCOPS: And our dream come true!

THE CAT: Suppose he wins?

SCOPS: Angora, be it known
Among the fancy breeds one Cock is shown
A great Pit-Game known through the whole creation,
A tawny fighting cock.

BLACKBIRD (*watching the ruffled plumage*): Profound sensation!

SCOPS (*continuing*):

One who has conquered champions near and far,
A White Pile! Yes, and on his heels there are
To slay his enemies, a pair of spurs,—
Not Nature's kind. More deadly far than hers.
To-morrow evening Chanticleer is dead;
His eyes picked out, his feathers few, and red.

BARN OWL (*enthusiastically*): We'll see his corpse.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*erect, dreadful*):
Yes, and the Comb we dread,
We'll tear it off,—having attained our ends,—
And we will eat it!

ALL (*with a great hurly-burly, ending in their horrible swaying and chuckling*): We will eat it, friends!

GREAT HORNED OWL (*opening his wings*): Hush!
(*Immobility.*)

SCOPS: Then . . .

BLACKBIRD (*skipping*): A pretty business!

SCOPS: What?

BLACKBIRD: What you propose.
If I believed you meant it, goodness knows,
I'd tell the Cock. But I'll not go so fast
(*He concludes with four little jumps*)
Because . . . he laughs . . . the best . . . who laughs at last. . . .

SCOPS (*ironically*): Oh, very well!
(*He goes on, more and more excited.*)
And if those fancy cocks
To-morrow night aren't safe behind their locks,
We'll eat them too—it's all that they are good for.

GREAT HORNED OWL (*to his neighbor*):
With Blackbird for dessert!

BLACKBIRD (*who missed that*): What's that?

SCOPS (*hastily*): Nothing!
(*With insane frenzy*) I stood for killing . . .
(*One hears in the distance*)
Cocorico!

(*Sudden silence.* SCOPS *stops and crouches down. All the Owls suddenly seem thinner and smaller.*)

ALL (*looking about and blinking*): What? What was that?
(*And all at once they open their wings and make ready for flight, calling*):

HORNED OWL: Hoot Owl! Screech Owl!

BLACKBIRD (*hopping from one to the other*): I say, don't go.
Why, what's your hurry?

VOICE (*of one Night Bird calling to another*):
Long Ear!

BLACKBIRD: Dawn's far away, I'm thinking.

BARN OWL: No! When he crows, at once he sets us blinking.

A SCREECH OWL: Surnia, you coming?

ANOTHER (*calling*): Nyctale?

ANOTHER (*joining her, flying*): Yes, my dear.
(*They start to fly, staggering, uncertain.*)

BLACKBIRD (*astonished*): They're stumbling. Ain't it queer?

NIGHT BIRDS (*blinking and doing queer, sad little turns in the air*): I suffer . . . Ay . . . ay . . . ay!

BLACKBIRD (*watching*) Eye trouble, that is clear.
(*The Owls fly off, one by one.*)

THE GREAT HORNED OWL (*remaining after all the rest have gone, with a cry of pain and rage*):
How can this Cock, foe of whatever flies,
Have in his voice a light that hurts our eyes?
(*Flies heavily away.*)

VOICES (*of the Night Birds from afar*): Strix!

BLACKBIRD (*following them with his eyes, among the trees and later in the blue gulf of the Valley*):
They are calling.

VOICE (*from a great distance*): Scops!

BLACKBIRD (*looking into the Valley where the dark wings pass, growing smaller and smaller*): A wavering flight!

VOICE (*calling and dying away in the distance*):
Owl of the Wood, the Yew, the Bel—

BLACKBIRD: They're out of sight!

(*Looks around and is at once the buffoon again.*)
It's supper time. I think I'll have a bite.
(*At this moment the* PHEASANT *comes with a bound from the brushwood and falls in front of him.*)
You! . . .

SCENE II

The BLACKBIRD, *the* PHEASANT; *later,* CHANTICLEER

PHEASANT (*breathlessly*):
I ran! . . . You . . . here! . . . I nearly died of fright!
You overheard their great conspiracy?—
BLACKBIRD (*foraging cheerfully in the moss*):
I'm studying insectology, you see.
PHEASANT: I tried to hear,—far off, in a deep ditch . . .
(*In an agonized voice*) Ah! . . .
BLACKBIRD (*with open amazement*): What?
PHEASANT: The plot!
BLACKBIRD (*calmly*): Went off without a hitch.
PHEASANT (*stupefied*): Huh?
BLACKBIRD: Blue shadows, good impressionist effect,—
The Owls as earnest as you could expect.
PHEASANT (*bounding*): Heavens! They planned his death!
BLACKBIRD: No, his decease
Less dangerous. These owls are birds of peace.
PHEASANT: But . . .
BLACKBIRD: Don't you fret. The Owls were grave enough.
There'll be no other grave from all this guff.
PHEASANT: These Owls . . .
BLACKBIRD: . . . Act well; but old stuff, very old.
PHEASANT: What?
BLACKBIRD (*impertinently*):
Rather like yours, they had a tale twice told.
PHEASANT: Ah . . .
BLACKBIRD (*soothingly*):
Their eyebrows go twice all around their eyes.
That's overdone. This plot went round likewise.

PHEASANT (*coming and going feverishly*):
I never understand when one is jesting.
BLACKBIRD (*winking one eye*):
You do the gypsy well, it's interesting.
PHEASANT: You wouldn't jest, if he were menaced,—Neighbor!
BLACKBIRD: Each owl's a bandit with a pewter sabre,—
Brigands of Big Talk,—very harmless fowl!
PHEASANT: Hulotte?
BLACKBIRD: A screecher?
PHEASANT: And the Great Horned Owl?
BLACKBIRD: He has two headlights, lighted by a trick,
Crick-crack! And that Cheveche, she's mighty slick.
Hers are like his, but they're acetylene;
One of the neatest stage effects I've seen.
PHEASANT (*quite bewildered by this raillery*):
Then? . . .
BLACKBIRD: Nothing doing, Madam Zingerella.
There's not a bit of danger for your fellow.
PHEASANT: Truly? I was so scared!
BLACKBIRD: Well, trembling gypsy,
We're all in danger,—chiefly from dyspepsy.
Because he keeps his head beneath his wing
An ostrich's stomach's such a famous thing.
—It's all arranged.
PHEASANT: Ah!
BLACKBIRD: Yes, our day you know
Has said, politely, Tragedy must go.
PHEASANT: But should we not at least warn Chanticleer?
BLACKBIRD: And start him hunting trouble? No, my dear.
PHEASANT (*quickly*): Yes, you are right.
BLACKBIRD: Sure. You can shy at anything at all
And make a mountain of a plantain gall.
PHEASANT: You have good sense.
BLACKBIRD: Yes, little Forest Queen.
VOICE OF CHANTICLEER (*without*): Co . . .
PHEASANT (*trembling*): Oh, 'tis he!

CHANTICLEER (*calling from a distance*): Who's there?
PHEASANT: I!—Has he seen?
CHANTICLEER (*still in the distance*):
The Pheasant! You! Are you alone?
PHEASANT (*looking at the* BLACKBIRD): Yes!
BLACKBIRD (*understanding*): . . . Supper time! I'm gone.
PHEASANT (*to* BLACKBIRD, *in a low voice*): Well?
BLACKBIRD (*making a sign for silence*): 'Sh.
(*He goes out, right, ordering*) Fresh wood lice, waiter!
PHEASANT (*in a whisper*): Better say nothing?
BLACKBIRD: Yes. I'll see you later.

SCENE III

CHANTICLEER, *the* PHEASANT

CHANTICLEER: So early up?
PHEASANT: To see the sunrise, yes.
CHANTICLEER (*trembling*): Ah? . . .
PHEASANT: Am I not excellent?
CHANTICLEER: Uh-huh!
PHEASANT: You're worried. Come, confess.
CHANTICLEER: I slept but ill.
PHEASANT (*politely*): Indeed?
(*A pause.*)
CHANTICLEER: You're going to this—day?
The Guinea's tea?
PHEASANT: Why, that's what made me stay!
CHANTICLEER: Ah, yes . . . (*a pause*) . . . I do detest her, I . . .
PHEASANT: Come to her tea?
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT: Let us say good-bye.
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT: Go to the party! You will see me, there.
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT: You will not come?

CHANTICLEER: I will, but in despair.
PHEASANT: Why?
CHANTICLEER: It is so weak!
PHEASANT: That isn't yielding much.
CHANTICLEER: Ah?
PHEASANT (*coming softly up to him*):
That which would be . . .
CHANTICLEER (*seeing her approaches, frightened*):
. . . Would be . . .
PHEASANT: A sacrifice to touch
My heart is . . . tell me . . . what you've told
No other.
CHANTICLEER (*trembling greatly*): The Secret of my Song?
PHEASANT: Yes!
CHANTICLEER: Bird of Gold,
My secret?
PHEASANT: Sometimes, just at the border of my wood,
I hear you singing in the sun's first flood.
CHANTICLEER (*flattered*):
Indeed! My song comes even to your hearing?
PHEASANT: Yes.
CHANTICLEER (*starting back*): My Secret! Never!
PHEASANT: You are not . . . endearing!
CHANTICLEER: You torture me!
THE PHEASANT (*languidly*): The Cock and the Pheasant: Fable.
CHANTICLEER (*whispering*): A Cock loved a Pheasant!
PHEASANT: And he was not able
To tell her anything.
CHANTICLEER: Moral:
PHEASANT: He was so mean.
CHANTICLEER (*close beside her*):
Moral: The darling's dress had golden sheen.
PHEASANT: Moral: I always hate familiar men.
Go say Co . . . a . . . co to some barnyard hen.
CHANTICLEER (*stamping*): Ah, I am furious!

PHEASANT: Say it to me then.
Co . . .
(*They are beak to beak.*)
CHANTICLEER (*ardently*): Co . . .
PHEASANT: Better than that . . . Quite slow!
CHANTICLEER (*with a long note of tenderness*): Co . . .
PHEASANT: Look, and don't laugh! . . . Tell me the Secret, now.
CHANTICLEER: What do you ask?
PHEASANT: You yearn to tell, I vow.
CHANTICLEER: This golden head has won—though it be wrong—
The golden secret of my morning song.
(*He marches abruptly up to her*)
Will you be worthy, when the word is said?
Is your heart true, your blood all loyal red?
PHEASANT: Speak!
CHANTICLEER: Look at me, Pheasant, striving to devine
Yourself my Secret, tell-tale line on line.
Curved like a trumpet,—like a hunter's horn,—
For my vocation surely was I born,
That from my body Song might rise and swell
As ducks were fashioned like a diving bell.
Wait! Have you seen how, now and then, I pause,
Scratching the grass-plot with impatient claws,
As one who seeks for treasure underground?
PHEASANT: I always thought that it was corn you found.
CHANTICLEER: It is not food that tirelessly I seek,
If corn be found, it is not for my beak,
Scornful of grain, I give it to some hen.
PHEASANT: Well, tell me why you dig the turf up then?
What are you looking for?
CHANTICLEER: A place to stand;
For, when I crow,—so Someone Else has planned—
I must stand firm.
PHEASANT: I know, and then you pause . . .
CHANTICLEER: I never crow until my eight sharp claws
Beneath the grass and flowers she brings to earth.

The stones that wound, have found the good black earth!
Then, closely clinging to the honest soil,
I sing . . . no song that I have learned with toil, . . .
This, Pheasant, is full half the mystery;
A Song untaught the good Earth gives to me.
It comes like sap out of the soil of Home,
And in its hour, it rises like a foam,
Filling my life,—a gift a royal prize.
When the sun waits, below the darkened skies,
Then, thrilling as the leaves and branches thrill,
Tremblings and throbbings all my being fill.
I feel that I am needed and was born
To be a trumpet and a curving horn.
As sounding conch-shells speak with Ocean's voice,
I am the Voice of Earth. And I rejoice
To be not bird, not cock,—only a mighty cry,
The cry of earth, uplifted to the sky!

PHEASANT: Chanticleer!

CHANTICLEER: This cry of earth, piercing the utmost night,
Is such a cry of passion for the light,
A cry of love so absolute, I say,
For the fair treasure that we call the Day,
From all that long for her; the pine's rough bark;
The foot-path rough with roots that 'scaped the dark;
The mosses on them; trembling oats half-grown;
The tiniest crystal of the tiniest stone;
'Tis such a cry of those who would reclaim
Colour, reflection, crest, and pearl and flame;
A yearning cry from every dew-wet flower
That longs to shine a rainbow for an hour;
The forest dark that fails not to aspire
To end its alleyed depths with flames of fire;—
This cry that to the azure mounts through me
Is such a cry of hungry agony
From all that lurks, disgraced and shut away,
Not knowing why, from the good Light of Day;

A cry of cold, of weariness, of fright
From everything defrauded by the Night;
The rose that trembles in the dark alone;
The hay that fain would dry and so be thrown
Into the barn; the tools that wish to reach
Their share of harvest; linens spread to bleach
Yearning the promised whiteness to achieve;
The cry of Beasts, who need not to deceive,
With naught to hide, nor any need to shrink;
Of rivers, crystal-clear from bed to brink.
Even,—O Night, thy works disown thy reign!—
The pool would be a mirror; mud again
Be one with honest soil and all it yields;
The cry magnificent of waiting fields
Travailing in birth of barley and of wheat;
Of trees whose blossoming is not complete;
Of green grapes, longing for a purple dress;
The bridge that waits for passing feet to press,
And flitting o'er it in the morning breeze
Birds shadows in the shadow of trees;
The cry of all who, thralled by Night no more,
Would wake and sing and work! Mountain, or cottage door;
A work-bench or a stone, made warm again
For human touch, or insects' patient train;
A cry of longing, love and need's distress
For all of Beauty, all of Wholesomeness,
Of all who wish in joy and Light of Day
To do their work with none to say them nay;
And when in me rises that vast appeal,
My very soul grows greater and I feel,
Being more spacious, I can draw again
Into my trumpet heart, more love, more pain;
If this great cry each moment grows more great;
If reverent, ere I send it forth, I wait,
Then, when to hurl it out, my lungs contract,
I know so surely 'tis a mighty act,

I have such faith in my life-given Crow,
To make Night fall, as fell great Jericho,—

PHEASANT (*aghast*): Chanticleer!

CHANTICLEER: So full of faith I send my song victorious,
A trumpet call so pure, so proud, so glorious,
That the horizon trembling crimson-bright,
Obeys me!

PHEASANT: Chanticleer!

CHANTICLEER: In vain the Night
Offers a twilight truce. I suddenly . . .

PHEASANT: Chanticleer!

CHANTICLEER: . . . Recoil, all dazzled by the thing I see,
Vermilion shine my feathers every one,
And I, the Cock, bring back to Earth the Sun!

PHEASANT: Then the whole secret of your Crow . . .

CHANTICLEER: Is this—I dare
To fear the East would sleep without its blare.
I do not say "Cocorico" to please the Echo,
To let her answer faintly "Cocorico."
I think not of glory; I think of the Light.
I crow; in that form I believe and I fight,
And if no Crow as proud on earth you hear
It means, I sing clear that it may be clear!

PHEASANT: But these are crazy words. You bring to birth? . . .

CHANTICLEER: What opens every flower, and soul, on earth,—
An eye, a window,—all that seeks the Light!
If Dawn be gray, I have not sung aright.

PHEASANT: But when you crow by day?

CHANTICLEER: I exercise;
Or else I swear the sun shall surely rise;
Promise the harrow ploughshare and the spade,
"To-morrow'll come. Let no one be afraid."

PHEASANT: But who wakes you?

CHANTICLEER: Dread lest I should forget,—
Greater than all alarums ever set.

PHEASANT: You think your crow across the world is hurled?

CHANTICLEER (*simply*):
I don't know very well what is the world.
I crow for this my Valley,—hoping, so
In every valley, is one cock to crow.
PHEASANT: Nevertheless . . .
CHANTICLEER (*rising*): But here I chatter on
And never realize 'tis time for Dawn.
PHEASANT: You'll bring it?
CHANTICLEER: These, you say, are crazy words?
I'll make the Dawn before you, Queen of Birds.
Sure in my very soul the deep desire
To please you, adding to the greater fire,
Will make me crow as never rooster crew
To make the Day most beautiful, for you.
PHEASANT: Fairer than other days?
CHANTICLEER: Assuredly.
Every new impulse that is born in me
Strengthens my Song, compact of all desire.
My happiness shall set the earth on fire!
(*And planting himself on the rising ground that commands the Valley*): Madam!
PHEASANT (*looking at him outlined against the sky*):
How beautiful he is!
CHANTICLEER: Mark well the skies.
Already pale? Dawn heard my earliest cries;
The sun is only hiding, out of sight.
PHEASANT: He is so beautiful he may be right!
CHANTICLEER (*speaking toward the East*):
Ah! Sun! I feel you, lifting up your head.
I laugh for rapture in my wattles red.
(*And driving down his spurs, suddenly, in a thrilling voice*):
Cocorico!
PHEASANT: What powers within his swelling body lurk?
CHANTICLEER: Obey me! I am Earth and I am Work!
The symbol of the forge-fire is my crest;

The ploughshare's furrows ruffle all my breast.
(*Whispers mysteriously*) Yes, yes, July!
PHEASANT: What is he saying?
CHANTICLEER: Part, with April, take!
(*He leans to right and left, as if reassuring someone.*)
I listen, Bramble; and I listen, Brake.
PHEASANT: He is superb!
CHANTICLEER (*to* PHEASANT):
I have to think of these . . . I have no choice
(*Caresses the earth with his wing.*)
Yes, Grass! . . . these small desires with me for Voice.
(*Speaking again to invisible things*)
A golden ladder . . . dance there all day long?
PHEASANT: Who wants a ladder?
CHANTICLEER: All the midges throng.
—Cocorico!
PHEASANT (*watching the skies and the fields*):
A trembling blue stirs in the misty air.
A star goes out.
CHANTICLEER: No! Still the star is there!
Even in daylight, stars shine,—never doubt.
PHEASANT: You do not blot them? . . .
CHANTICLEER: I blot nothing out!
—But you shall see how greatly I illume!
PHEASANT: Oh, I see fade . . .
CHANTICLEER: What?
PHEASANT: The blue has lost its gloom!
CHANTICLEER: Now it is green!
PHEASANT: Green, orange!
CHANTICLEER: Green turned to gold
You are the first, this morning, to behold!
(*The distant plain is robed in purple.*)
PHEASANT: The dawn seems bounded by the purple heather!
CHANTICLEER (*beginning to show signs of exhaustion*):
Cocor . . .
PHEASANT: Oh, yellow on the pines!

CHANTICLEER: All must be gold together!
PHEASANT: Now gray!
CHANTICLEER: It must be white. All is not finished yet.
—Cocorico!—Ill done!—but I am set!
PHEASANT: Each knot on every tree an eglantine!
CHANTICLEER (*with new enthusiasm*):
This day must be of all days most divine,
Since to my faith I add my mighty love.
Now, does my voice call Daylight from above?
PHEASANT (*carried away by the* COCK'S *frenzy*):
All—all is possible if all is love!
CHANTICLEER (*in a voice of command*):
Horizon, give again, for all my crowing
Your line of little poplars slimly growing.
PHEASANT (*leaning over to see the Valley*):
I see the shadows vanish at your cry.
CHANTICLEER: We see great mysteries, my love and I.
Ho, distant hills, your lines are not yet clear!
You love me, Pheasant?
PHEASANT: Ah, we must love, dear,
We two who share the Secret of the Day.
CHANTICLEER: You make me sing so no Dawn shall be gray.
PHEASANT (*bounding to him*): I love you!
CHANTICLEER: What you whisper, Golden One,
Will bring more glory from to-morrow's sun.
PHEASANT: I love you!
CHANTICLEER: Could you whisper "I adore"
A flood of gold on yonder hill I'd pour.
PHEASANT (*madly*): Well . . . I adore!
CHANTICLEER (*sending his Cry thrilling*): Cocorico!
(*The mountain grows golden.*)
PHEASANT (*showing the foothills still purple*):
But see the hills!
CHANTICLEER: A little patience, pray!
The heights are first to welcome back the day!
Cocorico!

PHEASANT: Across a little slope
Glides one bright ray.
CHANTICLEER: 'Tis yours.
PHEASANT: The general hope
Touches the village, brings it back to life.
CHANTICLEER: Coc . . . (*his voice breaks*)
PHEASANT: You can do no more.
CHANTICLEER (*rallying*): Success means strife!
(*Wildly*) Cocorico . . . Cocorico!
PHEASANT: But you are faint!
CHANTICLEER:
There still are shreds of gray. Sun, hear my plaint
—Cocorico!
PHEASANT: You'll kill yourself!
CHANTICLEER: My life and I
Are only precious as we form a cry.
PHEASANT (*leaning against him*): I'm proud of you.
CHANTICLEER: Your head against me pressed!
PHEASANT: I hear the day that rises in your breast!
I'm hearing in your heart the royal fountain
That will to-morrow purple yonder mountain.
CHANTICLEER (*while the cottage chimneys in the distance begin to send up smoke-wreaths in the dawning light*):
I give to you these homes of country folk.
As men give ribbons, I give wreaths of smoke.
PHEASANT (*watching the plain*): I see your work more plain.
CHANTICLEER: I see your eyes!
PHEASANT: Upon the meadow!
CHANTICLEER: On your ruff
(*Suddenly in a choking voice*) Ah exquisite surprise!
PHEASANT: What is it?
CHANTICLEER: Doing my duty wrought this lovely thing;
Gilding my Valley, I made gold your wing!
(*Tearing himself away, he turns precipitately to the right.*)
The shadows, fleeing, left some work to do.
Cocorico!

PHEASANT (*looking at the sky*): Oh, dear!
CHANTICLEER (*looking also; sadly*): Yes, it is true
The morning star grows pale!
PHEASANT (*regretting the little spark the Dayspring hides*):
It disappears!
CHANTICLEER (*bravely*):
It is an hour for gladness, not for tears.
(*Shaking off melancholy, he hurls himself to the left*)
There's something still to do. Coc . . .
(*At this moment several cocks are heard. Their song rings in the Valley.*)
There! You hear!
PHEASANT: Who dares?
CHANTICLEER: Those are the other cocks.
PHEASANT (*leaning over to see the Plain*): But now Earth wears
Her morning gown of pink.
CHANTICLEER: And they, Oh, hark!
Believe the Light they see!
PHEASANT: Sing to blue skies! . . .
CHANTICLEER: But I sang in the dark.
My Song was first; I sang it in the Night.
In darkness, it is brave to trust in Light.
PHEASANT (*indignantly*): Crowing,—while you still crow!
CHANTICLEER: Why, that is well.
Their songs accord with mine, its volume swell.
These several songs, although they know it not,
Hasten the shadows' rout from every spot.
(*On the brow of the hill he cries to the distant cocks*):
Together all!
CHANTICLEER (*and all the* COCKS *together*): Cocorico!
CHANTICLEER (*alone, with familiar cordiality*):
Boldly, bright Day!
PHEASANT (*at his side, stamping*): Boldly!
CHANTICLEER (*cheering the Light on*):
That thatch is not yet gold.
Forward! The hemp needs green. Brave Day, be bold!

PHEASANT (*in a transport*): White on the road!
CHANTICLEER: Blue on the river, ho!
PHEASANT (*with a great cry of joy*): The sun! The sun! . . .
CHANTICLEER: I see him! . . . Yet I know
That still he lies along the horizon's rim.
He must be lifted from the forest dim!
(*Both, reeling back, seem to be pulling together, lifting him up.* CHANTICLEER *sends out a cry of welcome*): Co . . .
PHEASANT (*calling as the Cock crows*): He's coming!
CHANTICLEER: . . . co . . .
PHEASANT: One sees . . .
CHANTICLEER: . . . ri . . . ri . . .
PHEASANT: His face
CHANTICLEER: . . . co!
PHEASANT: Clear above the trees.
CHANTICLEER (*with a last desperate effort*): Cocorico!
(*Both cry in one breath, flooded with sunshine*)
At last!
CHANTICLEER (*with satisfaction*): 'Tis great!
(*Staggers wearily against a tree-trunk.*)
PHEASANT (*running up to him, while all is one great glory*):
A song to greet the Sun!
CHANTICLEER (*very low*): I have no voice. I sang ere day begun.
(*And as all the other cocks crow in the Valley, he adds peacefully*): It doesn't matter. Hear the others crowing!
PHEASANT (*surprised*): You do not sing to greet him?
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT (*horrified*): He lives not knowing
You made him rise?
CHANTICLEER: What does it matter, dear?
PHEASANT: But . . .
CHANTICLEER: Hush, my Sweet, my Golden One; come near
And let me thank you, ere its gold is gone,
For never was a more successful dawn.
PHEASANT: You sang in darkness and in twilight pale.
How are you paid?

CHANTICLEER: By life in yonder vale.
(*Truly, busy sounds begin to ascend.*)
Tell me the sounds. I have not strength to listen.
PHEASANT (*who runs and perches on the brow of the hill, listening*): A finger strikes a sky that seems to glisten. . . .
CHANTICLEER: The Angelus!
PHEASANT: Now, other blows; I hear within their tone
Earth's Angelus, after high Heaven's own. . . .
CHANTICLEER: The forge!
PHEASANT: Lowing,—and then a song. . . .
CHANTICLEER: The plow, my sweet.
PHEASANT (*still listening*):
A nest of birds falls in the little street. . . .
CHANTICLEER (*more and more moved*): The school.
PHEASANT: Sprites all unseen that move with impish grace
Having a water-fight! . . .
CHANTICLEER: The washing place.
PHEASANT: Suddenly, everywhere,—the strangest things,—
Great iron locusts, rubbing iron wings. . . .
CHANTICLEER (*standing up, proudly*):
Why, if the scythes are whetting in the plain,
To-day they go to reap the golden grain.
(*The noises increase and blend; clocks, hammers, washing-bats, laughter, songs, grinding of steel, cracking of whips.*)
The world's at work! . . . I did it! . . . Awful thought!
Ah help me, Pheasant! If it be for naught!
(*He looks about him, bewildered.*)
I made the Sun rise. How? And whence? And why?
When reason comes again, a fool am I.
I, who believe I light the heavenly ray, . . .
I am so modest . . .
PHEASANT: What?
CHANTICLEER: You'll not betray?
You will not tell?
PHEASANT: My Cock!

CHANTICLEER: You promise me?
—If this were guessed by any enemy!
PHEASANT (*moved*): Chanticleer!
CHANTICLEER: I find myself unworthy of my gift.
Why am I chosen this great orb to lift?
When I have kindled all the heavens' glory,
Pride, that upbore me, falls. I doubt my story.
What! I, so little, made the mighty Dawn,
And must to-morrow, if the world go on?
I cannot do it! I have not the power!
Never again! This is my bitter hour.
Comfort me!
PHEASANT (*tenderly*): Dear!
CHANTICLEER: The weight is so profound.
—The swelling pride, what time I scratch the ground,
Will it come back? The future is enshrouded,
I know not how, in days forever clouded.
Now you can understand what wrings my heart.
The Swan is certain, if her long neck dart,
To find, beneath the water, grasses green.
The eagle seizes what his eye has seen.
You find your ant's-nests hidden in the earth.
I only know my work has awful worth.
My daily task remains a mystery.
I know not what to-morrow's fate may be.
Can I be sure, if I but do my part,
I'll find my song still welling from my heart?
PHEASANT (*enfolding him with her wings*):
Yes, you will find it, yes!
CHANTICLEER: Speak to me so.
Believe, with me,—but when I do not know,
Tell me!
PHEASANT: You're beautiful.
CHANTICLEER: No way my doubts to kill!
PHEASANT: You sang so well!

CHANTICLEER: Ah, say that I sang ill
But made to rise . . .
PHEASANT: Oh, how I worship you.
CHANTICLEER: No,—tell me, Pheasant, what I say is true.
PHEASANT: What?
CHANTICLEER: That it is I who make . . .
PHEASANT: My glorious Cock, you make
The sun to rise!
BLACKBIRD (*suddenly appearing*): Hello, old fellow! Shake!

SCENE IV

The Same; the BLACKBIRD

CHANTICLEER: The Blackbird! Oh, my Secret!
BLACKBIRD (*bowing admiringly*): Sure!
CHANTICLEER: This cynic bird!
(*To the Pheasant*):
Don't leave us . . . All my soul is bare. He heard . . .
His mockery can enter.
BLACKBIRD: It was great!
CHANTICLEER: But where were you?
BLACKBIRD (*showing a flower-pot, empty and overturned*):
Who? Me? Behind the plate.
CHANTICLEER: How . . .
BLACKBIRD: Well, I supped on earwigs, casserolle,
When suddenly, upon my little soul,
A dazzling . . .
CHANTICLEER: But . . .
BLACKBIRD: But what? It jars you some
To find a pot ain't always deaf and dumb?
CHANTICLEER: To listening in a flower-pot he has sunk!
BLACKBIRD: A flower-pot doesn't matter when you're drunk,
And I was drunk and crazy, on my soul!
I kicked the clay, while ogling through the hole.
PHEASANT: You saw?

BLACKBIRD (*showing the hole in the bottom of the flower-pot*):
Yes, for this cone-shaped earthen pot
For yellow bills a neat black hole has got.
And it was great! 'Twas worth a curtain call!
PHEASANT: Since you admire it, I forgive you all.
CHANTICLEER: But . . .
BLACKBIRD (*coming and going excitedly*):
'Twas lovely beauty! (That is pleonasm)
CHANTICLEER: What! You—you could . . .
BLACKBIRD: Could feel enthusiasm!
I'm not a duffer at that kind of sport, . . .
But you, old man, . . . oh, this is real transport!
CHANTICLEER: Truly?
BLACKBIRD: I do not need, when I admire, you know
A postman pigeon paid to tell you so.
The Cock that sings! Hou! And the dawn that shone!
Hou!
PHEASANT: I think I'll have to leave you two alone.
CHANTICLEER: Where are you going?
PHEASANT (*a little ashamed of her frivolity*): To the . . .
BLACKBIRD: You and she
Have made the daybreak,—for the Guinea's Tea!
CHANTICLEER (*to the* PHEASANT): Ought I to go?
PHEASANT (*tenderly*): Knowing that which I know,
I'll take the Guinea your regrets.
CHANTICLEER (*rather melancholy*): You go?
PHEASANT (*gaily*): I must,—to show your sunshine on my gown.
I'll come again. Wait here!
BLACKBIRD (*to* CHANTICLEER): That won't go down.
CHANTICLEER (*looking at him*): What won't?
BLACKBIRD: Of course I mean the sun you raised!
CHANTICLEER (*to the* PHEASANT): You'll soon be back?
PHEASANT: Yes, yes. (*Whispers, as she disappears.*)
The Blackbird is enlightened and amazed.
(*She flies off.*)

SCENE V

CHANTICLEER, *the* BLACKBIRD

CHANTICLEER (*coming back to the* BLACKBIRD):
Your whistle?
BLACKBIRD: Lor'! You knocked it down my throat,
And wonder taught me quite another note.
Like this, you know
(*Whistles admiringly*)
Hu . . . ca . . . hu . . .
(*Bows his head gravely*) 'Twas great, my lad.
CHANTICLEER (*trustingly*):
I told Patou that you were not so bad.
BLACKBIRD (*with profound conviction*): The greatest ever!
CHANTICLEER (*modestly*): Oh!
BLACKBIRD: The hens to win
(*Whistles admiringly*)
To make them think you make the day begin!
(CHANTICLEER *moves abruptly*)
Simple you say? It was . . . when once you spoke!
Were you hatched from the egg Columbus broke?
CHANTICLEER: But
BLACKBIRD: You beat all Don Juans, future, past and present!
Making a sunrise to scare up a Pheasant!
And it was done!
CHANTICLEER (*in an angry voice*): Be silent!
BLACKBIRD: . . . Little roof,
All gilded, pretty! Midges! Lots of proof!
CHANTICLEER: Be silent!
BLACKBIRD: And that last modest bit. I reverence you,
Or rather what you know . . .
CHANTICLEER (*controlling himself, drily*):
The Dawn? It's true
I have that honour.
BLACKBIRD: O you Troubadour!
You don't believe what happened?

CHANTICLEER: More and more
The Day advances. Yes.
BLACKBIRD: O you Prophet!
You did it well. You did her well. Now doff it.
CHANTICLEER: The Dawn? 'Twas fairly done. But every day
The sun obeys me.
BLACKBIRD: O you Joshu-ay!
You feel Dawn coming, then you up and crow,
We lyricists will plagiarize, you know.
CHANTICLEER (*crying out*): Wretch!
BLACKBIRD (*surprised*):
Watch is over! What keeps you on deck?
(*Winking*)
Mad since I learned his trick . . . "young rubberneck."
CHANTICLEER: I know no trick. I sing with open heart.
BLACKBIRD (*skipping*): It is a system!
CHANTICLEER: Don't laugh at this,—this is a thing apart.
Don't,—if you love me!
BLACKBIRD: Sure, I love such a master!
CHANTICLEER (*bitterly*): Half-heartedly!
BLACKBIRD: Pollux, I'm just half—Castor
To doubt this Fiat Lux is no assault
Upon yourself!
CHANTICLEER: Not that!
BLACKBIRD: It's not my fault.
I cannot strut . . .
CHANTICLEER (*watching him*): It's true. He hops—and hops.
See! I am shaken
(*He tries to stop him*) but he never stops!
He dodges Truth.
BLACKBIRD (*hopping past*): Just take me as I am.
CHANTICLEER (*pleading*):
Folly unchecked as deep as sin can damn.
This touches the deep places of my soul!
I must, I must convince you!
BLACKBIRD (*passing*): Ain't he droll?

CHANTICLEER:
Just once! At heart you know 'twas truth you heard?
BLACKBIRD (*hopping*): Sure!
CHANTICLEER: You guess its awful cost,—you hopping bird?
BLACKBIRD: You bet!
CHANTICLEER: Surely the song you overheard by stealth
You know it must have taken splendid . . .
BLACKBIRD: Health!
CHANTICLEER: Ah, let's be serious,—for we both have wings.
BLACKBIRD: Brother, let's talk about eternal things.
CHANTICLEER: To face the Sun,—to call him from the centre
Of utter Night requires
BLACKBIRD: A lynx-eyed Stentor.
(*He skips nimbly out of reach.*)
CHANTICLEER: This little soul!
(*With desperate patience*) Yet I must follow on.
Wait! Do you comprehend what is the dawn?
BLACKBIRD: Why, yes, old top; it's when the red horizon
Hatches a . . . sun. Vulgar, but not surpris'n'.
CHANTICLEER:
When on yon crest Light pours its golden fountain? . . .
BLACKBIRD: *Mons laborat:* Of course the sun's a-mountin'.
(*He hops out of reach.*)
CHANTICLEER (*following him*):
When I sing in its rays, as it pierces the thicket,
Ere the cricket has waked? . . .
BLACKBIRD: Why, I say, that ain't cricket!
(*He skips aside once more.*)
CHANTICLEER (*beside himself*):
Have you no need to utter any cry
When I have brought the rose flame to the sky
That makes the distant heron rosy-pink,
A very ibis?
BLACKBIRD: Ibis . . . Ibid . . . That means Repeat, I think.
(*He hops out of reach.*)
CHANTICLEER (*despairingly*):

It tires me more to give this soul a chance
Than chasing katydids all over France.
(*Violently*) You did not see the sky, benighted soul?

BLACKBIRD (*honestly*):

One only sees the ground through that black hole.
(*He shows the flower-pot with the hole in the bottom.*)

CHANTICLEER: You saw no heights their scarlet banners flinging?

BLACKBIRD: I watched your feet the whole time you were singing.

CHANTICLEER (*sadly*): Ah!

BLACKBIRD: Sure. Footprints, on the earth all damp with dew,
Of Dawn's awakener.

CHANTICLEER: Bird, I pity you.
Go to your shades, bird of obscurity!

BLACKBIRD: Well, Cock o' Dawn, that's good enough for me.

CHANTICLEER: 'Tis to the Sun I turn.

BLACKBIRD: Fire-worshipper!

CHANTICLEER: What gives life its sole worth?

BLACKBIRD: Here! I demur!
We've argued till you nearly broke a trace.

CHANTICLEER: Effort! which renders sacred all our race.
And therefore, scorner of all strife sublime,
I scorn you, but the snail whose patient slime
Ensilvers a whole faggot, I esteem.
All worthy life is Effort, and a Dream.

BLACKBIRD (*snapping up the snail the* COCK *indicated*):

That's one thing I can swallow!

CHANTICLEER: Ah, have done!
—Destroy a little life, to make a pun!
You've no more heart than soul. Enough. I've quit.

BLACKBIRD (*jumping up on the faggot*):

Ah, but I have a mind!

CHANTICLEER: I question it.

BLACKBIRD (*getting spiteful*):

All right! I'll offer you some hellebore
And then I wash my claws. You prove and more
All that your foes have said.

CHANTICLEER (*coming nearer*): What is this story?
BLACKBIRD: This play of Sun-bird; "I am light and glory."
CHANTICLEER:
You seek my foes? Who can rely upon you?
BLACKBIRD: That vexes you?
CHANTICLEER: No, punster! Shame upon you!
All comes out even, and you can but deal
Doubly with friends, who only half can feel.
(*Marching up to him*) Who are my enemies?
BLACKBIRD: The Birds of Night.
CHANTICLEER: Fool! Then I read my destiny aright,
If Night Birds are my foes!
BLACKBIRD: Does that insure it?
They have eye-trouble and are bound to cure it
By cutting off . . .
CHANTICLEER: What?
BLACKBIRD: The alarm clock
CHANTICLEER: Eh?
BLACKBIRD: Your throat.
CHANTICLEER: With what?
BLACKBIRD: A brother.
CHANTICLEER: Cock?
BLACKBIRD: A bird of note,
A real St. George.
CHANTICLEER: Where?
BLACKBIRD: At the Guinea's.
CHANTICLEER: Bah!
BLACKBIRD: He's armed, they say, as all the pit-cocks are
And wouldn't leave of you enough for hash
If we should go.
(*Seeing* CHANTICLEER *starts off*)
Where are you trying to dash?
CHANTICLEER: To the Guinea's.
BLACKBIRD: I've gone and told this crazy Chevalier.
(*Makes a feint of stopping him.*)
Don't go.

CHANTICLEER: Yes.
BLACKBIRD: No.
CHANTICLEER (*stopping in front of the flower-pot*):
Stay!
BLACKBIRD: What?
CHANTICLEER: Now did I hear
You got in that?
BLACKBIRD: Why, yes.
CHANTICLEER: How?
BLACKBIRD (*hopping into the pot again*): So. Quite pat,
(*poking his beak through the hole in the bottom*)
By this black little hole, while looking at . . .
CHANTICLEER: The ground? Then try it this way
and look through
At heaven by a little hole of blue!
(*With a blow of his wing he turns the pot over on the* BLACKBIRD *whom one hears pounding against his earthen prison and whistling in a stifled voice*)
Mocker! You shun the azure, but one can
Force you at least as much of heaven to scan
As from a flower-pot's shelter can be learned
When some strong wing your scheme has overturned.
(*He goes off.*)

(*The curtain falls*)

ACT III

THE GUINEA'S DAY

THE SETTING

Corner of an Old-fashioned Flower and Vegetable Garden

Pot-herbs and flowers. Egg-plants and ladies-traces.
Bouquet of Nymph and feast of Faun are there.
The reigning Rose. Gourd-vines, her throne to bear.
Onions for gravies. Lavender for laces.

Above the cauliflower in ordered spaces.
Still turning to her god in patient prayer,
Her black face, yellow framed, one ceaseless stare,
A wry-necked Sunflower now the Orient faces.

The Scarecrow by the currants stands, in wrath.
A watering pot, a barrow, bar the path.
Among the artichokes, an upright spade.

Part of the whitewashed wall has worn away;
On part, the berry bushes cast their shade,
Enlarged, blue-clear, mulberries for a day.

SCENE I

The GUINEA, CHICKENS, DUCKS, CHICKS, *etc.; the* PHEASANT; *the* BLACKBIRD; *later,* PATOU; INVISIBLE CHORUS OF WASPS, BEES *and* KATYDIDS

(*When the curtain rises, there is great clucking, calling and clattering of Hens and Chickens.*)

GUINEA HEN (*fluttering from one to another*):
How do you do? One can't move for the numbers.
The crowd I've asked goes clear to the cucumbers.

ORCHESTRA (*in the air*): *We murmur low . . .*

GUINEA (*to a hen*): Yes, Mondays, set apart . . .

A HEN (*looking at the enormous pumpkins which resemble newly-fired stoneware*): What pumpkins!

GUINEA: Good bits of ceramic art!

A CHICK (*hearing the chorus, beak raised*): Somebody's singing!

GUINEA: Yes . . .

WASPS: *We murmur low . . .*

GUINEA (*airily*): I have the wasps . . .
(*To a hen*) How do you do?
(*To chick*) . . . you know.
(*She whirls about.*)

CHORUS OF WASPS: *We murmur low—In blooming trees;*
As round we go;—Fruits ripen slow.—Some day they'll grow
To mulberries.

PHEASANT (*who passes with the* BLACKBIRD, *laughing*):
So you were captured?

BLACKBIRD: Like a small boy's hat
He clapped it on. I soon kicked out of that.
(*Looking around.*) Chanticleer isn't here?

PHEASANT (*surprised*): He means to come?

PATOU (*suddenly appearing on the barrow, where, as from a judge's bench, he watches the coming and going*):
I hope he'll change his mind and stay at home.

BLACKBIRD (*surprised to see him*): Patou!

PATOU (*lifting his head, which was burrowed in his collar, from which dangles a piece of broken chain*):

The Cock in passing told your tale to me.
In rage I burst my chain and came to see.

GUINEA (*seeing the* BLACKBIRD):

He's here . . . our cynic, . . . our—our Prince of Guyers!

A CHOIR (*in the trees*): *'Twas great . . . He did . . . We sing . . .*

PHEASANT (*lifting her head*): What! Choirs!

GUINEA: I have the Katydids.

CHORUS OF KATYDIDS: *Who knows . . . what thing—made green . . . the wing. . . .*
Elate . . . It rose . . . He sang . . . We sing.

YOUNG GUINEA (*hurriedly to his mother*): Say Katherinedids!

A MAGPIE (*in a black coat and white tie, announces the guests as they enter by one of the little round holes chickens make in hedges*): The Gander!

GANDER (*entering, sprightly*): Announcements, eh?

GUINEA (*modestly*): Good form forbids
Omitting that. An usher has to stay
At the thorn-gate.

MAGPIE: The Duck!

DUCK (*entering, dazzled*): Announcements?

GUINEA (*casually*): Yes, I have an extra man . . .

MAGPIE (*announcing*): Mrs. Turkey.

TURKEY HEN (*stiffly*): Announcements?

GUINEA: Cook's husband . . . quite a plan.

CHORUS (*among the flowers*): *Velvet bodies . . .*

TURKEY HEN (*raising her beak*): A choir?

GUINEA (*airily*): I have the Bees.

CHORUS: *Golden treasure . . .*

TURKEY HEN: Wonders everywhere!

GUINEA: The Bees are here, . . . the . . . Kathryndids in there.
(*To a hen passing*) How do you do to you?

BEES (*on the right*): *Golden . . .*

KATYDIDS: *He did.*
GUINEA (*to the* PHEASANT): These are all new to you?
YOUNG GUINEA: Pease blossoms there!
GUINEA: Some pumpkins here!
BLACKBIRD: You're quite a pair!
PHEASANT (*jostled in the crush, to the* BLACKBIRD):
Let's hide behind this sheltering watering pot.
BLACKBIRD: Bald-Pate-by-Spells, he's called, a name he got
Because he has, when he is held just right,
A shower of tresses, which are silver white.
GUINEA (*seeing the* CAT, *who, lying along the limb of a tree, watches everything*): I've the old Cat!
BLACKBIRD: Mewthusalem!
(*A clear whistle is heard from a pear tree.*)
GUINEA (*in a flutter*): I have the Lark.
BLACKBIRD: It's larks, if you have them.
PATOU (*dejectedly*): More puns!
GUINEA: I have the Dragon Fly!
BLACKBIRD: That's rather slim. 'Twould be a drag on me. I pass it by.
PATOU (*raging*): Wit of a Blackbird!
GUINEA (*pecks a cabbage leaf and shakes off some drops of water*): I've the Dew! It fell!
PATOU (*growling*): He'll make a pun on that!
BLACKBIRD: Why, sure. Dew tell!
GUINEA (*pointing to several chicks running around*):
You've seen them? Of the Order of I. C.
PHEASANT: I. C.?
GUINEA: Incubator Chickens!
PHEASANT (*innocently*): Oh, I see.
GUINEA (*presenting the chicks*): All from the upper tier.
A CHICK (*nudging his neighbor with his wing*):
She's quite impressed!
GUINEA (*scornfully*): Hen-covered eggs! Huh!
BLACKBIRD: Are rotten, eh? I guessed.
MAGPIE (*announcing*): The Guinea Pig.

GUINEA: The famous one that was inoculated.
You've heard about him? I have heard it stated
'Twas *anti-toxin*—and we have him here!
I've everybody!
(*To the* GUINEA PIG) How d'y'do?
(*To the* PHEASANT) My dear,
Let me present my friend, . . . He's really *big,*
Hyphen, you know, . . . yes, Guinea-Hyphen-Pig.
The Gobbler lectures near the Currant Patch,
By the Tea Roses, . . . club teas, . . . dear, you catch . . .
The thought?
(*To a passing Hen*) How do you do to you?
Club teas and current topics! Ah, that's new to you?
(*Whirling about*)
I've everybody! I've the Golden Pheasant,
The Duck—it's really Duke you know,—is present;
I have . . .
(*She looks about and fails to see the* TORTOISE.)
No, no, he's late. I mean the Tortoise.

BLACKBIRD (*regretfully*):
What subject will he miss? You haven't—taught us.

GUINEA (*suddenly grave*): A lecture on the Moral Problem.

BLACKBIRD (*desolated at his loss*): Oh!
(GUINEA *goes back, fluttering madly among her guests.*)

PHEASANT (*to the* BLACKBIRD): Who is this Tortoise?

BLACKBIRD: Old and rather slow;—
A bit hard-shelled for Moral Problems, though.
Does walking stunts, in English checks, y'know.
(*Buzzing is heard in the Hollyhocks.*)

PHEASANT: A Drone!

GUINEA (*hurrying back to them*):
I have the Drone,—of course a lesser light,
But very fetching.

BLACKBIRD: Bees have point all right.

GUINEA (*leaping toward the* DRONE):

How do you do? (*Whirls madly, trying to follow him.*)
—Tortoise is all I lack.

BLACKBIRD (*touching his forehead with the tips of his wing*):
No, that ain't all!

GUINEA (*at the back of the patch, screaming like a guinea*):
Glad to see you back! Come back! Come back!

A HEN (*seeing cherries fall near her*): Why, here are cherries!

PHEASANT (*lifting her head*): There's a breeze.

GUINEA (*running wildly forward again*): I have the Breeze;
She shakes down cherries from the cherry trees.
Quite unexpected. Came informally! . . .
I have—I have . . .
(*She flutters away.*)

BLACKBIRD: "What will the harvest be?"
(*By careful manoeuvres he has reached the tree where the* CAT *is lying. He whispers to the* CAT):
Cat, what about the plot?

THE CAT (*who can see far beyond the hedge*):
It moves. I see a file
Of fancy Cocks. Peacock, in modern style.
Leads them along.

A CRY WITHOUT: E-on!
(*Everybody rushes toward the entrance.*)

PATOU (*growling*): Hear his accordeon!

MAGPIE (*announcing*): The Peacock.

PHEASANT (*to the* BLACKBIRD): Nicknamed?

BLACKBIRD: Chevalier of Eon!

SCENE II

The Same. The PEACOCK

GUINEA (*to the* PEACOCK, *who enters slowly, head held stiff and high*): Master, stand here! Oh, how I love those tones!
Peacock and sunflowers! Isn't that Burne-Jones?

ALL (*pressing around the* PEACOCK): Dear Master!

A Pullet (*whispering to a duck*):
You are launched, if he but speak.
I try to get his notice every week.
Another Pullet (*who has succeeded in getting near the* Peacock, *stammering with emotion*):
Master, how do you find my latest cheep?
Peacock (*lets fall the word*): Definitive!
(*Sensation.*)
A Duck (*trembling*): Oh, he's very deep!
And my quack, quack, O Master?
Peacock (*lets fall*): Lapidary!
(*Sensation.*)
Guinea: Oh, how discerning! I have noticed! Very!
At my Teas oftenest, he says his word—
Peacock: Hebdominal!
All the Chickens (*half fainting*): Oh!
A Hen (*advancing, faintly*): Luminous! Master Phenomenal,
How do you find my dress?
Peacock (*after a glance*): Affirmative!
The Houdan (*same play*): My hat is . . . ? (*Sensation.*)
Peacock (*close attention*): Total! (*Sensation.*)
Guinea (*enthusiastically*): Just total, as I live!
Pheasant (*who pretends to hear only the Bees*):
I hear again the Choir Invisible.
Guinea (*presenting her son to the* Peacock's *attention*):
How do you find my son?
Peacock: Derisible!
Chorus of Bees: *We whisper deep . . .*
Guinea (*enchanted*): Oh, he's derisible!
Pheasant: Who is?
Guinea: My son!
Chorus of Bees: *We whisper deep . . . And buzzing creep. . . . Where lilies sleep. . . .*
Guinea (*going back to the* Peacock): Be altruistic
And praise my orchestra. It's . . .
Peacock: Asynartistic!

A HEN (*to the* GUINEA):
Such verbal skill, my dear, is rare in Birds.
GUINEA: I call him Master of Unwonted Words.
PEACOCK (*offering his words in a loud discordant voice*):
I am in truth . . .
GUINEA: Oh, a most striking fact!
PEACOCK: Ruskin, attenuated, with more tact . . .
GUINEA: How true!
PEACOCK: Due to myself. This difference is between us,
I'm a priestly Phyllornis, a Messan Maecenas,
A volatilizer of vocal vocabularies,
The genuine gemmed judge of linguistic constabularies.
PATOU: Oh, my head!
PEACOCK (*carelessly*): I am . . . shall I say guardian . . .
GUINEA (*gushingly*): Yes!
PEACOCK: Ah, no! Thesmothetes.
GUINEA (*to* PHEASANT):
You've seen our Peacock. Now you know what great is.
PHEASANT (*a little bored*):
Surely I know. The Cock will soon be here.
GUINEA (*enchanted*):
To-day! My Mondays are my fad, my dear—
My little teas grow still more . . .
PEACOCK (*a little spitefully*): Ostentatious!
GUINEA: An ostentatious tea! And, Oh good gracious,—
(*She announces to everybody, with enthusiasm*)
Chanticleer!
PEACOCK (*whispering*):
Your greatest triumph has not yet been seen.
GUINEA (*in a flutter*): A greater . . .
PEACOCK (*bowing his head mysteriously*).
GUINEA: Who?
PEACOCK (*moving back*): You'll see.
GUINEA (*persistently, following*): Who?
PEACOCK: Oh!
MAGPIE (*announcing*): Cock Braekel or Campine!

SCENE III

The Same; later, one by one, the COCKS

GUINEA (*stopping short, overcome*):
Cock Braekel? At my Tea? There's some mistake!
COCK BRAEKEL (*bowing*): Madam!
GUINEA (*her breath taken away by the white cock with black marks*): I'm so surprised. I don't know how to take
This . . .
MAGPIE (*announcing*): The Slate-clawed Cock of . . .
GUINEA: Oh, dear me!
MAGPIE (*finishing*): Of Ramelslohe!
PEACOCK (*carelessly, in the* GUINEA'S *ear, while the dazzling cock bows*): One of our newest leucotites!
GUINEA (*her mind in a tumult*):
One of our—one of our look-a-sights!
MAGPIE (*announcing, in a voice more and more triumphant*):
Cock Wyandotte, who has a Brown Spur cross!
(*Mad excitement among the hens.*)
GUINEA (*quite wild*):
Merciful Heavens! Son, come back. I'm at a loss . . .
YOUNG GUINEA (*running up*): Mama!
GUINEA: Cock Wyandotte!
PEACOCK (*with studied carelessness*):
That fluted comb is New Art, is it not?
GUINEA (*to the newcomers, who are surrounded by astonished cluckings*):
Fluted combs. . . . Gentlemen . . . I mean . . . your Graces . . .
YOUNG GUINEA (*who has run to look outside*): Mama!
GUINEA (*to the cocks*): At my tea!
YOUNG GUINEA: Here's more to take their places!
MAGPIE: The Cock of . . .
GUINEA: Mercy! Of what?
MAGPIE: Mesapotamia with the Double Comb!
GUINEA (*hurling herself at the newcomer*):

Double Comb! O, sir, O, Master . . . You . . . at my
At Home!

PEACOCK: Fie on all desuetude! I wished to show
Young Gentlemen superlative, *raræ aves,* you know.

GUINEA (*dashing back to the* PEACOCK):
Oh, thanks, dear Peacock!
(*To the* PHEASANT, *patronizingly*) Pardon me, my dear,
The Cock of Mesapotamia being here,
You'll understand. . . .
(*Runs up to the great cock, who inclines his two combs.*)
The honour you have done
My home. . . .

MAGPIE (*announcing*): The Ring-eyed Orpington!

GUINEA (*wildly*): Ring-eyed!

BLACKBIRD: She is the worst!

MAGPIE (*while the* GUINEA *flies to the* ORPINGTON COCK):
Barbed Cock of Varna!

PEACOCK (*to the* GUINEA): Slavonic!

GUINEA (*leaving the* ORPINGTON *and rushing to the* BARBED COCK): I knew it from the first,—
Slavonic soul! This makes my Day complete!

MAGPIE (*announcing*): The Scotch Gray . . .

GUINEA (*leaping up in the air*): Heavens!

MAGPIE (*finishing*): . . . Cock with Pink Feet!

GUINEA (*leaving the* BARBED COCK *for the* SCOTCH GRAY):
Oh, that Pink Foot! Dramatic as I live,
To launch a Pink Foot!
(*With profound conviction*) Oh, how tentative!

MAGPIE (*announcing*): The Cock . . .

GUINEA (*wildly*): There can't be any more at my At Home!

MAGPIE (*finishing*): With Goblet Comb!

GUINEA (*who rushes to each newcomer with mad enthusiasm*):
With Goblet Comb!
Oh, sir, how new,—a goblet! Oh, I beg . . .

MAGPIE: Blue Andalusian Cock!

GUINEA (*rushing to the* ANDALUSIAN COCK): Surely your egg

Was laid among the strings of a guitar,
A Spanish one!

MAGPIE: The Langsham Cock!

PEACOCK: A Tartar, sir, you are!

ALL THE HENS (*dazzled by the* BLACK GIANT): A Tartar!

MAGPIE (*announcing*): Gold-spangled Hamburg Cock!

CRIES FROM THE HENS (*at sight of this gold-laced cock in a cocked hat*): Gold-spangled! Hamburg!

BLACKBIRD: Major!

GUINEA: . . . Joyful shock
Will kill me! Oh, my famous little Teas!
(*To the* HAMBURG COCK, *whose plastron is striped yellow and black*) Oh, sir, what is your waistcoat . . . ?

BLACKBIRD: Zebra,—see the z's!

GUINEA: Zebra . . . Oh, this surpasses all . . . surpasses all . . .
All my . . . all our . . .

MAGPIE: The Cock . . .

GUINEA (*bounding forward*): Oh!

MAGPIE: Of Burmah!

GUINEA: Did he call
Him Cock of Burmah?
(*The excitement grows.*)

PEACOCK: Yes, an Indian Prince!

GUINEA: He has a Hindoo soul! I know it, since
(*Going up to him adoringly*) I'm rather esoteric!

MAGPIE (*announcing*): Cocks Poland-Dutch
And Padua!

GUINEA: This is too much!
(COCKS OF PADUA *enter shaking their feathers.*)

MAGPIE: Gold-spangles! Silver-spangles!

GUINEA (*gazing at the plumes of the newcomers*):
Over every head a cascade dangles
And streams . . .

BLACKBIRD: The streams a-bridged!

GUINEA (*who no longer knows what she is saying*):
Bridges! and streams!

PHEASANT (*to* PATOU):
Poor thing, she just repeats or else she screams.
MAGPIE (*announcing with louder and louder cries more and more marvellous cocks*): The Cock of Bagdad!
PEACOCK (*whose harsh voice dominates the tumult*):
. . . Thousand and One Nights!
GUINEA: Yes, he is Thousand . . .
ALL THE HENS: So thousand . . .
GUINEA: Dazzling sights!
PEACOCK: 'Tis Karamalzaman himself!
MAGPIE: Ruffed Bantam Cock!
GUINEA (*enchanted*): How eighteenth century! A dwarf, a flock
Of dwarfs!
YOUNG GUINEA (*in a low voice*): Be calm, Mama! You can . . .
GUINEA: Oh, no, I can't. It's Karamalzaman!
I can't tell which I like best . . .
MAGPIE: The Guelders Cock!
GUINEA (*precipitating herself on the newcomer*):
Another Belgian! And another shock
Of . . .
MAGPIE: Malay Cock with Serpent Neck!
GUINEA (*to the* PEACOCK): 'Tis for your sake!
To you we owe this neck of Peacock-Snake!
MAGPIE: Duck-breasted Cock! Cock with Beak of Rook!
The Vulture-Footed Cock!
GUINEA (*who has cast herself upon the new arrivals in turn, clamoring at sight of the last one*): Oh, Master look!
A marvel—an Albino! On his head,—look please,—
He has a cheese. . . .
A HEN: A cream cheese!
ALL THE HENS: A cream cheese!
MAGPIE: The Creve-Coeur Cock!
GUINEA (*dashing to him*): Oh, horns upon his head!
PEACOCK: Satanic!
MAGPIE: Ptarmigan Cock!
PEACOCK: An esthete!

GUINEA (*rushing forward*): A . . . what you said!
He wears a Syrian helmet!
MAGPIE: White Pile Cock!
GUINEA (*dashing up*): He has upon his head . . .
(*She stops suddenly, seeing his clipped comb*)
. . . Why, ne'er a lock
Nor nothing! Isn't that complete?
THE CAT (*to the* BLACKBIRD, *from her height on the tree, pointing out the* WHITE PILE):
That's the pit-cock. He hides, upon his feet,
A pair of gaffs.
(WHITE PILE *mingles with the throng of fancy cock and is lost to sight. The palpitating hens are surrounded with the throng of new cocks.*)
MAGPIE: The Negro Cock!
GUINEA (*crazily among the crowd of cocks filling the garden with their plumes, crests, cascades, colbacks, double and triple combs*): Oh, dear!
My dear . . . I mean, . . . dear sir! . . .
PATOU: She's mighty near
Clean crazy.
GUINEA (*to nobody*): Master . . .
MAGPIE: The Cock of Nine Toes or the Bare-necked Cock!
GUINEA: The Naked Cock!
MAGPIE (*correcting*): Bare-necked.
GUINEA (*to a hen*): This shouldn't shock,
It's so sincere!
BLACKBIRD: Bang! Boom!
MAGPIE: Cock of Japan.
BLACKBIRD: Bing!
MAGPIE: Cock Splendens!
GUINEA (*seeing this cock, whose train is eight metres long*):
A court train for a man!
MAGPIE: The turbaned Cock . . .
BLACKBIRD (*seeing this one is quite flat behind*): I like his front!
MAGPIE (*finishing*): . . . Or Cock without a Rump!

GUINEA (*beside herself*):
This is the end! He does look like a frump,
But ne plus ultra, quite beyond a doubt,
Means not a thing behind!
BLACKBIRD: Does mammy know you're out?
MAGPIE (*while more and more hetroclitical cocks come surging past*): Cock Walikikili, Pseudo-Chinese!
GUINEA: How smart!
PEACOCK: Kaleidoscopic . . . cosmopolitan . . . New Art.
MAGPIE: Blue Java! White Java!
BLACKBIRD (*losing all shame*): Java coffee-colored!
GUINEA (*rushing to the Javanese guests*): Ah, gentlemen!
MAGPIE: Brahma Cock, . . . Cochin Cock!
PEACOCK (*superbly*): A famous dullard!
The Orient in decay!
GUINEA (*insanely*): Decay!
PEACOCK: A morbid charm!
GUINEA (*to the* COCHIN):
Oh, what an obscene eye and morbid charm!
MAGPIE (*screaming at the top of his lungs as if seized with the general delirium*):
Chili Cock, frizzled forward! Antwerp Cock, across!
ALL THE HENS (*falling upon the newcomers*):
Morbid!
Decayed!
And forward!
GUINEA: Oh, a cross!
MAGPIE: The Tumbler Cock without Feet!
A HEN (*faintly*): On . . . his . . . belly!
GUINEA: An India-Rubber Cock!
PHEASANT (*to* PATOU, *who from his barrow, looks into the distance*): And Chanticleer?
PATOU: I tell ye
He's nearly here.
PHEASANT: You see him?

PATOU: . . . Scratching up the ground.
He comes.
MAGPIE: Umbrella-crested Rooster of Ghoondook!
CRIES OF ENTHUSIASM: Oh!
MAGPIE: Iberian Cock with Linen Whiskers!
CRIES OF ADMIRATION: Look!
MAGPIE: Bans-Backin, or Chub-cheeked of Thuringia!
CRIES: Oh!
BLACKBIRD: I think the Magpie's stringing you!
MAGPIE: Cock Buff-Cochin-Yankee-Plymouth-Rock!
CHANTICLEER (*appearing on the threshold, behind the last-announced cock*):
Announce, without addition, please, the Cock.

SCENE IV

The Same. CHANTICLEER; *later, the* PIGEONS *and the* SWAN

MAGPIE (*measures* CHANTICLEER *with his eyes, then, disdainfully*): The Cock!
CHANTICLEER (*from the threshold, to the* GUINEA):
Excuse me, Madam,
(*He bows*) —Your obedient slave,—
If I present myself in plumage grave.
GUINEA: Come in! Oh, come on in!
CHANTICLEER: Should I? Who knows?
I have a limited supply of toes.
GUINEA (*graciously*): Oh, never mind!
CHANTICLEER: I have ascended no Karpathian height, . . .
. . . And I have feet I can't keep out of sight.
GUINEA: But . . .
CHANTICLEER: . . . Ear like a clove of garlic, crimson comb. . . .
GUINEA: One pardons business dress for an At Home.
CHANTICLEER (*advancing*): I only have—alas that I'm so sober—
The green of young April, the gold of October.
I am abashed. The Cock, and just the Cock,—
One found in every farmyard with his flock;
A cock made like a cock, whose forms still rise

Upon the clock-tower; in the artist's eyes;
And in the penny toys,—those happy cocks,—
A baby finds 'mongst shavings in a box.

A VOICE (*ironically, from the noisy group*): The Gallic Cock?

CHANTICLEER (*mildly, but without turning his head*):
None needs to use that name,
If native born and certain of his claim;
But this good name you take upon your beak
When you say just, The Cock, of him you speak.

BLACKBIRD (*to* CHANTICLEER, *very low*):
I've seen your butcher!

CHANTICLEER (*who sees the* PHEASANT *near*):
Hush! She must not know.

PHEASANT (*coquettishly*): You came to see me?

CHANTICLEER (*bowing*): Say "I told you so."

GUINEA (*hearing the* COCHIN-CHINA *chuckling, surrounded by the hens*): The Cochin-China's dreadful!

CHANTICLEER (*turning*): That will do!

THE HENS (*around the* COCHIN-CHINA, *giving affected shrieks of horror*): Oh!

GUINEA (*delighted*): The most salacious, gallinacious . . .

CHANTICLEER (*more loudly*): That will do!

THE COCHIN-CHINA (*stops, and with sly surprise*):
The Gallic Cock!

CHANTICLEER: I am no Gallic Cock
If by that word, perverted, you would mock!
Now, by the Sun! Here is no hen but knows
'Tis no soprano when my trumpet blows.
But your perversities that would excite
Innocent hens in filth to find delight
Revolt my love of Love. I honour passion
Honest and wholesome. But this modern fashion
Of broken, dirty, Kitchen-China clatter,
Giggling and keeking, is another matter.
In my veins flows red blood of honest stock.
I am no Kitchen Capon, but a Cock!

PHEASANT (*whispering*): Come to the woods. I love you!
CHANTICLEER (*looking around him*): If there would appear
One simple soul!
MAGPIE: Two pigeons!
CHANTICLEER (*not able to believe his ears,—to the* GUINEA):
Two are here?
GUINEA: I was expecting them!
CHANTICLEER (*drawing a long breath*):
Two Pigeons! Oh, at last!
(*He runs to the entrance.*)
PIGEONS (*entering with marvellous leaps*): Hop! Hop!
CHANTICLEER (*recoiling*):
They're tumblers! Well, that hope is past!
PIGEONS (*presenting themselves between two somersaults*):
We're English clowns!
CHANTICLEER: LaFontaine! This is humbling!
GUINEA (*bounding after the acrobats who disappear in the crowd*): Hop! Hop!
CHANTICLEER: Pigeons who live by tumbling!
There must be something real! This can't go on!
Something sincere . . .
MAGPIE: The Swan!
CHANTICLEER: Thank Heaven! A swan!
(*Recoiling.*) He's black!
THE BLACK SWAN (*preening himself, highly satisfied*):
I gave up white, but left the outline on!
CHANTICLEER: And you are just the shadow of a swan!
SWAN (*abashed*): But . . .
CHANTICLEER (*escaping him, and leaping on a bench where, through a gap in the hedge, he can see distant field*):
Let me get up upon this bench and see
If Nature still exist though far from me.
I see green grass, a sucking calf, a cow.
Thank Heaven! The calf has but one head, I vow!
(*He comes down, near the* PHEASANT.)

PHEASANT: Oh, come away! The woods are honest green,
Remote and fit for love . . .

BLACKBIRD (*to the* GUINEA, pointing *out the* PHEASANT *and* CHANTICLEER, *who are deep in conversation, standing very close to each other*): A case!

GUINEA (*vivaciously*): You mean . . . ?
(*She opens her wings to screen them.*)
I love an intrigue,—and at my At Home!

BLACKBIRD (*poking his beak under the* GUINEA'S *wing to watch them*): I think she means to annex that crimson comb.

PHEASANT (*to* CHANTICLEER): Ah, come!

CHANTICLEER (*drawing back, afraid*):
No, I must sing where Fate decrees.
Here, I am useful and beloved.

PHEASANT (*remembering what she heard last night in the farmyard*): By these?
No, no. Come to the woods where we may hear
Real pigeons bill and coo. Ah come, my dear!

TURKEY (*at the back of the patch*):
Madam, the great Peacock . . .

PEACOCK (*modestly*): Peculiar Cock . . .

TURKEY: Will spread his tail. He yields to our entreaties.

PEACOCK: My faith! I am . . . my list so near complete is . . .
(*Coolly*) Shall I say artisan . . . ?

GUINEA (*effusively*): Yes!

PEACOCK: No! Pyrobolist.
Recall dodecagynia most amethyst,
They're less cuproid, prasine and smaragdine
Those multiform fires that we often have seen
Which rain from all skies, most fourteenth-of-Julyly;
Capital capitules capitularily.

CHANTICLEER: May the devil admire me!

PEACOCK: I dare to say I . . .

PHEASANT: I understood that!

PEACOCK: . . . Despite general disuse

Use fan-phantasm fantastic . . .

(*A scream of admiration is heard.*)

CHANTICLEER (*to the* PHEASANT): The Goose!

PEACOCK: When its rays roll around, with its rose-rays arrayed,
All the joyousest joys . . .

CHANTICLEER: And the noisomest noise!

(PEACOCK *spreads his tail.*)

A COCK (*to the* PEACOCK):
Master, whom do you choose to put all in the shade?

COCK OF PADUA (*hurrying forward*):
Me! I look like a palm tree!

A CHINESE COCK (*thrusting the other aside*):
Me! I'm like a geranium.

AN ENORMOUS MUFTI (*shooing the* CHINESE COCK *back*):
Me! I wear a cauliflower on my calcanium!

CHANTICLEER: Why, every one's the Barnum and the Shows!

ALL (*parading under the eyes of the* PEACOCK):
See my beak! See my feet! See my tail! See my toes!

CHANTICLEER (*calling to them suddenly*):
Your summer opening, see, the wind approves.
The Scarecrow gives his blessing. Look, he moves!
(*Truly, behind them, the wind has lifted the Scarecrow's arms, which are silently extended above this masquerade.*)

ALL (*startled*): Huh?

CHANTICLEER: Now, hear what the Manikin says to the Fan!
(*And while the wind blows through the holes, and flutters the rags, lending a strange life to the Scarecrow*)
The bird makes a pose, but the pose makes a man.
Now, what say the pantaloons dancing a jig,
But "I once was the Fashion?" The coat, waxing big
With the breath of the wind? "I once was the style."
The vest,—"I led the fashion,"—provoking a smile!
And what, the old hat that a beggar rejected?
"I once was the fashion." These poor sleeves expected
To capture the wind—for so fleetly it passes,
They thought 'twas the Fashion!

PEACOCK (*to the Poultry, who are rather scared*):
Why, come, you poor asses,
The Scarecrow can't talk.
CHANTICLEER: It is what Man would tell us.
PEACOCK (*whispering to his neighbors*):
I introduced you, and the Cock is just jealous.
(*To* CHANTICLEER, *ironically*)
What do you think of all these high-born folk?
It's really time the Country Landlord spoke.
CHANTICLEER: I think that these are fabricated Cocks,
Made by a merchant wanting fancy stocks,
Who, to elucubrate a useless thing,
Took here a caruncle and there a wing;
I think that in these cocks is no more Cock
Than idle hands can whittle from a block.
They show far better in a catalogue
Than in a farmyard near some honest dog.
These roosters, bristled, frizzled, tufted, curled,
Were never made by Nature in the world.
Nature's maternal hand makes smooth and fair;
'Twas Aviculture made those . . . notions . . . there.
Those popinjays, convulsed, deformed, uncouth,
Have neither style nor beauty, line nor truth.
Their forms have lost the egg-shell's sweet ellipse,
—A poultry yard from the Apochalypse!
A COCK: But, sir . . .
CHANTICLEER: And I say,—bear you witness, O Sun!—
When a Cock is a Cry then his duty is done.
And not being that, it is justice ironic
That makes him both revolting and bubonic,—
Soon disappearing; his one notoriety,
To be a variety of a variety!
A COCK: But . . .
CHANTICLEER (*going now from one to another*):
Yes, Cocks affecting scorn of Nature's plan,
Cockarde, cock-feather, cock and cockalan,

With supercockly cockernonies crested, . . .
—I prate like Peacock when my wrath has bested
My silent resolution;—Cockatoos, cockaded
With coquelicos, cockerily shaded;
Not cocksure only of your cocoricos,
You are—just poppycock and hybrid echoes!
Fashion! the cock-brained victim that she chooses
For her cock-bree, just plays cock-all,—and loses!
She, cock-a-bendy, takes you cock-a-hoop,
Then throws you down, like chickens with the roup,
Like old cock-metal or last year's cocoon,
When some new cock with coccyx more buffoon
Comes cock-a-pentie 'gainst her cock-hedge rotten!
Well in a . . . cock-a-trice . . . he'll be forgotten!
Of all coqueluchons cockarde ever wore,
Some egg can hatch one cockaleekie more.
Cockchaffers chased, rococo cocks again
Will go eat cockles, exiled from Cockayne!

A Cock: How can a fellow not be that? . . . rococo?
Chanticleer: By thinking of his . . .
A Cock: Of his? . . .
All the Cocks: Of his? . . .
Chanticleer: Cocorico!
A Cock (*haughtily*):
We think of that, sir, and have made it known!
Chanticleer: To whom, pray?

SCENE V

The Same. Three Young Chickens Who Have Been Hopping Alertly Among the Fancy Cocks

First Chicken: To us.
Second Chicken: Of course.
Third Chicken: To us.
All Three (*bowing simultaneously*): Your tone, Maestro?

FIRST CHICKEN (*interrogatively*): Your voice?
SECOND CHICKEN (*same play*): Bass?
THIRD CHICKEN (*same play*): Tenor?
SECOND CHICKEN: Lyric?
THIRD CHICKEN: Old or new?
CHANTICLEER (*taken aback, looking at the* GUINEA):
What is all this? An interlude?
GUINEA: An interview.
SECOND CHICKEN: You take it in the chest?
THIRD CHICKEN: Or in the head?
CHANTICLEER: I take it—how?
FIRST CHICKEN: Talk! We investigate. I think you said
You took it in the . . .
CHANTICLEER (*trying to pass and run away*): An investigation?
THIRD CHICKEN (*barring the way*):
The Cocorical Movement of the Nation.
FIRST CHICKEN (*same business*): Your first repast is frugal?
CHANTICLEER: Who's this Chick
Whose questions like a teasel's claw-hooks stick?
FIRST CHICKEN (*bowing*): I represent the Cocoricograph.
SECOND CHICKEN (*same play*): The Cocoricologue.
CHANTICLEER (*nervously*): I want to laugh
But . . . (*He tries to pass.*)
FIRST CHICKEN: No, you don't,—without a paragraph.
CHANTICLEER (*hemmed in*): I . . .
SECOND CHICKEN: You must have tendencies?
CHANTICLEER: Like others, then.
SECOND CHICKEN: What most attracts you?
CHANTICLEER: Why, a pretty hen.
FIRST CHICKEN (*unsmilingly*):
Nothing, of course, would part you from your song?
CHANTICLEER: But . . . I send it . . .
SECOND CHICKEN: Then? . . .
CHANTICLEER: It goes,—so you are wrong.
THIRD CHICKEN (*more and more insistent*):
You live by rule? . . . Reports, you know, are rife . . .

CHANTICLEER: I . . .
FIRST CHICKEN: You life is . . . ?
CHANTICLEER: My Song!
SECOND CHICKEN: And your song is . . . ?
CHANTICLEER: My life.
THIRD CHICKEN: *How* do you sing?
CHANTICLEER: By effort, struggle, pain.
FIRST CHICKEN: But tripartite or normal, please explain.
Coc-ori-co or Co-co-ri- . . .
(*He beats the measure furiously with his wing.*)
CHANTICLEER (*stepping back*): He'll hit me in the face.
SECOND CHICKEN: Do you count one-one-two? One-three?
Three-one? What place
Has rhythm in your own dynamic scheme?
BLACKBIRD (*crying out*):
Who has not his own pet dynamic scheme?
CHANTICLEER: . . . ic scheme?
THIRD CHICKEN: Where do you lay the stress?
Upon the Co . . . ?
CHANTICLEER: The stress? . . . Upon the Co? . . .
THIRD CHICKEN: On the ri . . . ?
CHANTICLEER: On . . . ?
FIRST CHICKEN (*impatiently*): What does your School express?
CHANTICLEER: The School of Cocks?
SECOND CHICKEN (*glibly*): Why surely. Some there be
Who sing Cocorico—others Kikiriki!
FIRST CHICKEN (*same manner*):
One must be Cocoriquist or Kikiriquist!
CHANTICLEER: Coco . . . Kiki . . .
THIRD CHICKEN: Others, of course, exist.
A COCK (*advancing*):
The sole French form is Cockadoodledoo.
CHANTICLEER: Now, who the devil is he?
FIRST CHICKEN: Anglo-Hindoo.
SECOND CHICKEN: And that Turk there whose comb is like a cyst
Sings Coucouroucou.

THE TURK (*coming forward*): I am Coucourouquist.
SECOND CHICKEN (*screeching in* CHANTICLEER'S *ear*):
Master, don't you replace in certain cases
Your Cocorico by Caceracases?
CHANTICLEER (*startled*): Cacaraquist, then?
ANOTHER COCK (*coming up on the right*): I, sir, suppress
The vowels. (*He crows.*) K! K! K! K!
CHANTICLEER (*trying to escape*): Is this distress
A nightmare?
ANOTHER COCK (*coming up on the left*):
Oh, oh, I say! You fellows want
When crowing just to mute the consonant.
CHANTICLEER (*quite upset*):
How many tricks can Turks and Arabs play
With four good syllables as plain as Day?
ANOTHER COCK (*thrusting all the rest aside*):
For me, I mingle all . . . Cocaricocacou!
In one song, free and flowing.
CHANTICLEER: He's crazy, and I'm going!
COCK (*crying loudly*): Flowing . . .
CHANTICLEER (*struggling to pass and crying as loudly*): Going!
ALL THE COCKS (*around him, struggling in a mass*):
No, Cacar . . . No, Kiki . . . No, Coucour . . .
CHANTICLEER: Who trusts in his own story?
THE COCK WHO MIXES ALL TOGETHER:
The free Cocorico! It's obligatory!
CHANTICLEER: Who is this cock who lords it over all?
FIRST CHICKEN: A wondrous cock who never crows at all.
CHANTICLEER (*with meek despair*):
And I am just a simple Cock that crows.
EVERYBODY (*disgusted, moving off*): Oh, well!
CHANTICLEER: I give my song,—the rose tree gives her rose.
PEACOCK (*sarcastically*): I foresaw the rose!
CHANTICLEER (*aside, nervously, to* BLACKBIRD):
When will my butcher come?
These Chicks have talked me blind and deaf and dumb.

EVERYBODY (*scornfully*): The Rose! Oh!
GUINEA (*shocked by such banality*):
Let's speak of flowers more fit for my At Home,
More . . .
PEACOCK: Obsolete.
(*With the most disdainful impertinence.*)
Will you decline Rosa?
CHANTICLEER: I will, with pleasure, Peacock that you are!
And yet, I pardon you and your rude cry,
For slurs upon the lovely Rose, Rosae,
For you, poor trickster, lose your little all.
For all your fireworks, she reigns in Bengal.
(*He looks about him.*)
But from Bantams to Dorkings, Cocks, be as I am
Defenders, Champions of . . .
A COCK (*indifferently*): Whom?
CHANTICLEER: The Rose, Rosam.
To declare to the world . . .
BLACKBIRD (*cynically*): It's a cinch that he poses
As Champion Quixotic . . .
CHANTICLEER: Rosarum, of Roses.
Whom all should adore.
A COCK: Whom?
CHANTICLEER (*more and more challenging in his fervor*):
Whom? Roses, Rosas
Where sleeps the rain as in the alcarazas.
Roses, that are and will be . . .
A VOICE (*cold and cutting*): Painted wenches.
(*All the fancy cocks fall back, disclosing the* WHITE PILE, *who appears tall, thin and sinister, at the back, between their serried ranks.*)
CHANTICLEER: At last!
BLACKBIRD: It's time to climb up on the benches!
CHANTICLEER (*to the* WHITE PILE): Sir . . .
PHEASANT: You won't take up the challenge of this giant?
CHANTICLEER: One can be smaller and yet self-reliant.

(*To the* WHITE PILE, *as he crosses slowly to him*)
A word like that is one a Cock should fear
To use. And you resemble . . .
(*A chick has run out between* CHANTICLEER *and the pit-cock.*
CHANTICLEER *gently puts him aside, saying*):
Please excuse me, dear.
(*To the* WHITE PILE, *looking irritatingly at his shaven comb*): A combless cockatoo.

WHITE PILE (*stupefied*):
Combless? . . . Cockatoo? Who . . . Who . . . Who?

CHANTICLEER (*beak to beak with the* WHITE PILE):
You . . . You . . . You.
(*A pause. They look each other over. Ruffs lifted.*)

THE WHITE PILE (*with emphasis*):
In both Americas, when on my tour,
I killed three Clayborns,—it was rarely fewer
In any pit,—two Sherwoods, brace of Smoks;
A Black Sumatra. . . . Other owner pokes
Some grains of dope in his, to brace their muscles,—
Five Red Games at Cambridge, ten Braekel at Brussels.

CHANTICLEER (*very simply*):
If boast must be of killing, I am dumb.
I've succoured, shielded and protected some.
I may be brave, in my own humble way.
Put off that air of mole-hill-masher, pray.
I came to-day knowing you lay in wait.
The rose upon my beak was merely bait,—
A chance for you to show your brutal mettle.
You did not fail to snatch the dangled petal.
Your name?

WHITE PILE: White Pile. And yours, sir?

CHANTICLEER: Chanticleer.

PHEASANT (*running to* PATOU): Patou!

CHANTICLEER (*fiercely to* PATOU, *who growls angrily*):
Here, you, keep out . . .

PATOU (*rolling his rs*): It's harrrrd, my dearrr.

PHEASANT (*to* CHANTICLEER):
A Cock need not die for a flower, goodness knows.
CHANTICLEER: He slurs at the Sun who besmirches a Rose.
PHEASANT (*running to the* BLACKBIRD):
You said it would be arranged! Your word depends . . .
BLACKBIRD: One can't patch up a quarrel between friends.
GUINEA (*uttering screams of despair*):
Frightful! A duel! And at my At Home!
How sad! (*to her son*) to think the Tortoise hasn't come.
A VOICE (*calling as one who calls the odds*):
Chanticleer, ten to one!
THE GUINEA (*beginning to place her guests, making the hens climb on flower-pots, gourd vines and benches*): Hurry!
BLACKBIRD: Guinea's happy.
Honours of an affair of honour. Rather snappy.
(*A big circle forms. On the second row, the fine cocks; in front, avid for the spectacle, all the hens, all the chicks, and all the ducks of the Poultry Yard.*)
PATOU: Go in and win. They want to see your guts.
CHANTICLEER (*sadly*): I've done them only good.
PATOU (*showing him the circle hateful and expectant*): Look!
(*All the necks are stretched out; all the eyes gleaming. It is hideous.* CHANTICLEER *looks, understands, and hangs his head.*)
PHEASANT (*with a cry of disgust and anger*):
Oh, the barnyard sluts!
CHANTICLEER (*lifting himself to his full height again*):
So be it. Let them know what I have been!
My Secret!—They shall hear! . . .
PATOU (*earnestly*): Ah, no. I've seen
Your secret, boy, in my old dreamer's heart!
CHANTICLEER (*addressing the crowd in a ringing voice, his chest lifted as one who makes his confession of faith*):
Know all that it is I . . .
(*A terrible silence. To the* WHITE PILE, *who has moved impatiently*): Patience! We'll quickly start!

I wish to do, before the Butcher Bird
Has done his part,—a brave deed.

WHITE PILE: Ah?

CHANTICLEER: Yes,—make myself absurd.

PHEASANT: No!

CHANTICLEER: I wish to die mid laughter, set at naught.
(*To the crowd*)
Make merry, poultry by a blackbird taught!
(*In a voice that rises and rings gloriously*)
It is I and my Song that illumine your skies.
(*Stupefaction. Then a wave of merriment sweeps the crowd*)
Is every one merry? On guard!

THE GOLD-SPANGLED COCK OF PADUA (*bowing his colback*):
Sirs, time flies.
(*The fight begins.*)

VOICES (*amidst peals of laughter*):
It's killing! . . . Side-splitting! . . . 'Twill kill me. . . .
He said . . .

BLACKBIRD: The old French gaiety is not quite dead.

A CHICKEN: 'Tis day when he sings!

A DUCK: He sings and all's bright.

CHANTICLEER (*while warding off the* WHITE PILE'S *blows*):
Yes, I, who bring back to the Valley, the Light!

A CHICKEN: How?

CHANTICLEER (*in a solemn voice while parrying and thrusting*):
Because they neither try to make or mar,
The songs of other cocks as nothing are,
But mine . . .
(*He is wounded.*)

A VOICE: Biff! In the neck!

CHANTICLEER: . . . brings back . . .
(*He is wounded again.*)

TURKEY: A fool, say I.

CHANTICLEER: . . . the day . . .
(*He is wounded again.*)

A VOICE: Pam! On the beak!

CHANTICLEER: . . . Dayl . . .
A VOICE: Bing! In the eye!
CHANTICLEER (*staggering, blind with blood*): . . . the Daylight!
A VOICE (*mockingly*): A thing to make one an obscurantist!
CHANTICLEER (*repeats mechanically, under the rain of blows*):
I bring the dawn!
PATOU (*baying*): Yes, yes, yes, yes!
THE PHEASANT (*sobbing*): He missed!
Oh, hit him, darling!
A CHICK: Nickname for the Dawn!
ALL (*applauding*): Yes!
(WHITE PILE *throws* CHANTICLEER.)
PHEASANT: Horrors!
BLACKBIRD (*supplying the quip*): The Horizontal Houri.
A VOICE: Are you on?
A nickname for the Cock!
ALL (*stamping and shouting*): Yes!
BLACKBIRD: Safety Razor!
ANOTHER VOICE: Or the Latin Light.
CHANTICLEER (*defending himself, foot to foot*):
Another quip! I still can kick all right!
A VOICE: The Latin Reveille!
CHANTICLEER (*who now seems kept alive by the jibes*):
Another pun!
And I whose only feats of arms were done
Upon a farm . . .
ANOTHER VOICE: The beak-on!
CHANTICLEER: I thank you. I . . .
(*His feathers flutter around him.*)
CRIES OF EXULTATION: He's being picked!
CHANTICLEER: I feel . . . Another jest!
A CHICK: Light up! Light up!
CHANTICLEER:. . That pricked!
I feel by some strange law
Strengthened by insults, mockery and . . .
AN ASS (*putting his head over the hedge*): Hew-haw!

CHANTICLEER: Thank you. That teaches me to fight.
WHITE PILE (*sneering*): He fight!
He's down and out!
PHEASANT (*pleading*): Ah, stop!
A VOICE: Four to one on the White!
PHEASANT (*seeing* CHANTICLEER'S *bleeding throat*):
He's bleeding!
A HEN (*standing on tip-toe behind the* SPANGLED PADUA COCK):
I want to see the blood!
WHITE PILE (*striking furiously*): I'll have your hide!
THE HEN (*that wants to see*): I can't see for his crest!
BLACKBIRD: Hats off, inside!
(*It is evident that* CHANTICLEER *is lost. He rolls over as if dying.*)
A VOICE: A good one! On the comb!
PIERCING CRIES (*from all the maddened cries*):
Hey! Snatch it off him then!
Kill! Strangle! Tear!
PATOU (*from the barrel*): Ah, quit! You sound like men!
(*Measured cries, that keep time with the blows rained upon* CHANTICLEER.)
In the eye! On the head! On the wing! On the . . . the . . .
(*Sudden silence.*)
CHANTICLEER (*surprised*):
Why—what . . . the circle breaks, the applauders flee?
(*He looks about him. The* WHITE PILE, *leaving the attack, has run close to the hedge. There is a strange movement among the fowls.*)
CHANTICLEER (*exhausted, bleeding, reeling*):
What are they planning for my agony?
(*And suddenly, overcome*) Oh, joy, Patou!
PATOU: What now?
CHANTICLEER: I wronged them! See!
For every one, ceasing to laugh and talk
And jibe, comes to my side.

PATOU (*seeing that as they run to* CHANTICLEER, *they look anxiously up at the sky, says simply*):
Look, Chanticleer! The hawk!

CHANTICLEER: Ah!

(*A shadow passes slowly over the motley flock, crouching and huddling and instinctively drawing closer and closer to* CHANTICLEER.)

PATOU: One does not count, when the great Shadow lowers,
On stranger cocks to shield these heads of ours.

CHANTICLEER (*suddenly on his feet, at his full height, magnificent, his wounds forgotten, and in his old tone of authority*):
That's right. Around me! Close!

(*And all, their heads crouched between their wings, press precipitately around him.*)

PHEASANT: Oh, brave and gentle heart!

(*The Shadow passes again. The pit-cock himself grows smaller. Only* CHANTICLEER *remains, towering above a sea of feathers that trembles tumultuously.*)

A CHICK (*following the hawk with his eyes*):
Two times a shadow nearly seemed to dart!

CHANTICLEER (*calling the chicks, who run madly to him*):
Here, Chickies!

PHEASANT: You will take them 'neath your wings?

CHANTICLEER: Their mother is a box,—poor tiny things.

(*The Shadow in ever-lowering circles passes a third time, ever blacker.*)

PHEASANT (*looking steadily up*): He's poised!

ALL (*moaning with fright*): Oh!

CHANTICLEER (*calling to the skies in a thrilling voice*):
I am here!

PATOU: He hears that call!

PHEASANT: He has flown!

(*The Shadow passes.*)

ALL (*uttering cries of joy and deliverance*): Ah!

(*And they run to get their places to see the end of the fight.*)

PATOU (*furiously*): Now take your places, all.
CHANTICLEER (*trembling*): You mean it?
(*He looks. It is true. The circle instantly forms again. The necks are stretched out. The eyes gleam.*)
PHEASANT: And now they want your death in very deed,
Because you saw their terror and their need.
CHANTICLEER: He cannot kill me now,—nor they, nor he,—
For I have seen the Common Enemy.
(*He marches up to the* WHITE PILE.)
I found my courage, trembling for another.
WHITE PILE (*stupefied by the sudden onslaught*):
Whence came this strength?
CHANTICLEER: Where you lost yours, my brother.
I rage at black, as bulls grow wroth at red.
Thrice have I seen Night in the bird o'erhead.
(*The* WHITE PILE, *pressed against the hedge, is about to use his gaffs.*)
PHEASANT (*crying*): Beware! He has two razors hid!
CHANTICLEER: I knew it.
THE CAT (*from his tree to the* WHITE PILE):
Now, use your gaffs!
PATOU (*ready to jump from the wheelbarrow*):
You Cat, if he should do
I'll kill him, surely!
THE CROWD (*frustrated, angry*): Ah!
PATOU: . . . Despite your cries!
WHITE PILE (*feeling that he is lost*): So much the worse!
PHEASANT (*who doesn't take her eyes off him*):
One gaff is turned!
WHITE PILE (*striking with the gaff*): He dies!
(*He gives a terrible cry as* CHANTICLEER, *leaping aside, evades the thrust.*) Ah! (*He falls.*)
BEWILDERED CRIES FROM THE SPECTATORS: What happened?
BLACKBIRD: Nothing, that is, just a sleight
Of foot. He cut his left one with his right!

THE CROWD (*hooting, follows the* WHITE PILE, *who, having gotten painfully up, limps away to safety*): Hu!

PATOU *and the* PHEASANT (*laughing, crying, talking in a breath, around* CHANTICLEER, *who lies motionless, exhausted, his eyes closed.*)

Chanticleer, we are here,—to take you home!
What do you say?

CHANTICLEER (*opening his eyes, looking at them, says softly*):

To-morrow's dawn will come.

SCENE VI

The Same, except for the WHITE PILE, *who has disappeared*

(*The crowd, having chased the* WHITE PILE *out of sight, coming back tumultuously to* CHANTICLEER, *applauding him.*)

CHANTICLEER (*starting, and crying in a terrible voice*):

Back all of you! I know now what you are!
(*The crowd retreats precipitately.*)

PHEASANT (*bounding up to him*):

Come to the forest, where real wild beasts are!

CHANTICLEER: No, I'll stay here.

PHEASANT: Knowing them, Chanticleer?

CHANTICLEER: Because I know!

PHEASANT: You will remain?

CHANTICLEER: Not for these,—for my Crow.
Less clear, perhaps, 'twould thrill from alien soil!
The dawn will come. For that we live and toil,
My Song and I.
(*Obsequious movement of the crowd toward him.*)
Back, you! Since what befell
I only have my Song.
(*All fall back and, alone with his pride, he begins*): Co . . .
(*To himself, rallying against his grief*)
Only my Song. Sing well!
(*He begins again.*)

Co . . . Do I take it in my throat? Or . . . Co . . . up in the head?
Shall I count one-three, or, who was it said
Two-two,—the accent, . . . Coucour . . . no, I seem
A little puzzled. . . . Kikir . . . and the scheme? . . .
Coc . . . (*Seized with agony.*)
I am embroiled in all their schemes and schools.
Eagles would fall if eagles flew by rules.
And . . .
(*He makes a desperate effort to crow, which ends in a hoarse croak.*)
Coc . . . I cannot sing! I am bewildered,—I
Who knew not how I sang, but only why!
(*With a cry of despair.*)
I've nothing left! All gone! Oh Light above
How shall I find my Song!

PHEASANT: Ah, come!

CHANTICLEER (*throwing himself on her breast*): My love!

PHEASANT: Come to my forest, where birds freely sing!

CHANTICLEER: Oh, let us go!
(*He starts off with her, and then turns suddenly*):
But first . . .

PHEASANT (*trying to hurry him away*): Ah, come, my king.

CHANTICLEER (*resolutely, coming back*):
To all the . . . Guineas . . . gathered for these teas,
Leave this good garden. . . . Am I right, O Bees? . . .
To its fair task of bringing fruit from flowers.

BUZZING OF THE BEES: *Sound sense! . . . Sound sense! . . .*

CHANTICLEER: It is a law in this wise world of ours,
Nothing that's done in noise is well done. Noise prevents
The peach from ripening. And the grape . . .

BEES (*buzzing away*): Sound sense.

CHANTICLEER: . . . loses its purple bloom.

BEES (*in the distance*): Sound sense.

CHANTICLEER (*going back with* PHEASANT): Now let's away
But first I have a warning for these G . . .

(PHEASANT *puts her wing over his beak*)
. . . good hens; these fancy roosters, . . . stylish, very . . .
Will find their feeding'pans so necessary,
They'll run off at the cry of
(*Imitating a voice, calling*) "Chick, chick, chicky,"—
For very hungry are these gentry tricky.

PHEASANT (*leading him away*): Come, dear.

A HEN: She's taking him!

CHANTICLEER: Yes.
(*Going down again*) But I must come back
To tell this Peacock, with . . .
(*pointing to the* GUINEA) . . . this Pot-a-rack . .

GUINEA (*enchanted*): Insulted in my home! A big sensation!

CHANTICLEER (*to the* PEACOCK):
Colonel of Fashion, by your own creation,
Your neck is blue, your Bengal spirits quail,
For fear of "going out" before your tail.
Hurried along by all its myriad eyes,
Some day you'll fall and you will never rise
Save in that crypt where most false artists stop
(*Imitating the* PEACOCK'S *tricks of speech*)
Shall I say . . . stuffer's?

GUINEA (*automatically*): Yes.

CHANTICLEER: No, Taxidermist's Shop,
To use the word you would yourself have chosen.

BLACKBIRD: Pam!

CHANTICLEER (*turning to him*): And as for you . . .

BLACKBIRD: You go along, suppose'n.

CHANTICLEER: I'm going on.
(*He comes nearer*) You met,—unlucky day!—
A smart Parisian Sparrow, so you say,
And you were lost. Since then your only vision
Has been of seeming,—shall I say?—Sparisian.

BLACKBIRD: But . . .

CHANTICLEER: I'm going on. You never thought a minute
A whistle's not a flute for blowing in it.

You even walk, your folly to complete,
As sparrows hop along a city street.

BLACKBIRD: I . . .

CHANTICLEER: I'm surely going on. Without surcease,
"Sparrowing" day and night; not finding peace
Even in dreams; of truth you've grown so chary
You're less a sparrow than a caught canary.

BLACKBIRD: I . . .

CHANTICLEER: Poor country blackbird, trying day and night
To seem, not rustic, but suburbanite.
To mincing speech grosbeaks are not inclined
The slang you try is just green grapes, you'll find.
Your beak cracks honest corn, nor finds it trouble;
You'll find Parisian grapes a bursting bubble.
You learned from the Sparrow his dodge and his trick,
A wit's understudy, 'tis there that you stick;
You've learned, at the best, from this Sparrow from town
To be Pantaloon to a far better Clown.
Rivarol out of style is dubbed Calino soon
For wit overstrained makes the greatest buffoon.
. . . You offer scepticisms long gone out,
Picked up like crumbs. It takes no sense to doubt.
Poor little bird, who, full of mean delight,
Hurries hot-foot old scandals to recite.
Poor bird, that finds streets "broad," and meadows "narrow."

BLACKBIRD: But . . .

CHANTICLEER: I'm going on! You imitate the Sparrow!
He is not slily mean, the dullest knows;
He never makes a fetish of a pose;
He plays his pranks as saucy gamins do!
He has no cult of levity like you,—
Percher on bushes, whistler of one note!
(*One of the Japanese Cocks behind him titters*)
—I'll stuff your ka-kimona down your throat,
Cock of Japan!

JAPANESE COCK (*hurriedly*): Excuse me, sir!

CHANTICLEER (*continuing to the* BLACKBIRD): You try
To ape the sparrow,—but he perches high.
Telegraph wires his chirrups underscore.
Ah, well! I do not wish to grieve you more,
But—I have listened, when they stole my corn,—
They put you on the blink,—you are not on . . .
BLACKBIRD (*abashed*): The Cock talks slang?
CHANTICLEER: I speak all, I, the Cock;
I speak every tongue from Languedoc to Bontoc.
BLACKBIRD: Bontoc?
CHANTICLEER:
That shot went home. Let someone put you Jerry.
BLACKBIRD: Jer . . . ?
CHANTICLEER:
That's what I said. Your slang is musty, very,
Truly Parisian, made in Germany,
Shopworn Hanover seconds . . .
BLACKBIRD: . . . Sec . . . ?
CHANTICLEER: Off the quay!
BLACKBIRD: He's scolding me for slang in speech that bristles . . .
CHANTICLEER: He whistles best, who oftener sings than whistles.
BLACKBIRD: But . . .
CHANTICLEER: You said "go on." I do it. You are vexed?
BLACKBIRD: I . . .
CHANTICLEER: The Safety Razor cuts when none expects.
BLACKBIRD (*wildly*): Oh! (*He tries to escape.*)
CHANTICLEER (*following him*):
You ape the Sparrow! But his impudence
Is not a form of staying on the fence,
A pose of vagueness that the crowds admire;
The Sparrow's eye is glad,—or flashes fire.
You lack the key that winds this charming toy!
He's gay and honest as a saucy boy,—
The secret of the little beggar's charm
By which a heart of steel he can disarm,
Till there is nothing we would not forgive

His "penny, chippie, see!" But he would give
Without the "penny," if you listened well,
The secret key. He's sound as any bell;
'Tis that he's gay and bold he loves,—believes;
Upon a railing under city eaves,
Bound by the sky, the only cage he knows,
He feasts on breadcrumbs that a baby throws.
We trust the rascal's merriness of heart,
For he is gay in spite of hunger's smart.
His cry of "Chippie!" teasing old and young
Were often "Pity" on a meaner tongue.
—*You* ape a bird with such mad courage blest
The very Arc de Triomphe holds his nest,
The breach i' the barricade?—A heart so free
There gay defiance in his "Chippie! See!"
He sings at a bullet and laughs at a spit!
His heart makes the bird,—not his walk nor his wit!
You are not gay, because you are not loving.
You think ill-humor, humor. That wants proving.
You can't dethrone our honest little friend
With wry-mouthed laughter; teach us to depend
On gilt extinguishers instead of sparks.
Oh, guess again! We aren't such easy marks!
—His wit is sunny. Yours is rather murky.

GUINEA (*applauding whatever is said at her Day*): Bravo!

A HEN (*to the* BLACKBIRD): You'll take it out . . . ?

BLACKBIRD (*prudently*): Yes, on the Turkey.

(*At this moment a Voice is heard calling*):

Chick, chick, chicky!

(*And all the splendid Cocks, rushing toward the irresistible Voice, leave in a mass.*)

GUINEA (*running after them*): Really, must you go?

A PADUA (*left alone of his kind*): Yes . . . Pardon . . .

(*He vanishes.*)

THE GUINEA (*in her most society clatter*):

They're going . . . breaking up . . . I didn't know . . .

CHANTICLEER (*to the* PHEASANT): My Golden One, come now.
GUINEA (*running to* CHANTICLEER): You, who're so brave
You'd save yourself?
CHANTICLEER: It is my Song I'd save.
THE GUINEA (*running to her son*):
My son, I'm in a state! I want a sheath . . .
I mean, a hob . . .
A HEN (*crying after* CHANTICLEER):
When are you coming back?
CHANTICLEER (*as he disappears*): When you have teeth!
(*He goes off with the* PHEASANT.)
GUINEA (*to the* YOUNG GUINEA):
Such a success! Such famous people sought us!
(*Whirling about among the very last departing guests*)
Good-bye! . . . Till Monday! . . . Well, that's done!
THE MAGPIE (*announcing*): The Tortoise!

(*The curtain falls*)

ACT IV

THE NIGHT OF THE NIGHTINGALE

THE SETTING

The Heart of the Forest

A green asylum for a heart deceived.
Shadow that quiets, and a peace that grows
To healing, where the giant oak upthrows
His crook-backed roots, against the dark relieved.

Here squirrels scuttle. Darting rabbits cross
To burrows where the lusty colt's-foot grows.
Its pearly tents the mushroom village shows.
An acorn, noiseless, falls upon the moss.

Evening. A spring. A bind-weed. World's eclipse.
From tall osmondas to pale heather tips
The spider's graceful web is thrown and wrought.

Within its mesh, a perfect drop of dew,
Convex, unbroken, gleams the darkness through,—
A little lady-bird in crystal caught.

SCENE I

(*As the curtain rises one sees in the underbrush, half-hidden, rabbits drinking in the evening. A moment of silence and coolness.*)

RABBITS, *an Invisible* CHOIR *of* BIRDS

A RABBIT: It is the hour when the two warblers sweet,
Black-hooded or brown-mantled, as is meet,
—One from the reeds, one from the garden's sherds;—
Call us to evening prayer.

A VOICE (*in the trees*): *O God of Birds!*

ANOTHER: *Or rather, lest an Alien Ear should mark,—*
The vulture's God is not God of the lark,—
O God of little Birds!

A THOUSAND VOICES (*in the leaves*): *O God of Little Birds!*

THE FIRST VOICE: *Who made our bodies light as spoken words;*
Who painted Thy blue sky upon our wings;
We thank Thee for the Day, and for the springs
Wherefrom we drank; the wholesome grain we ate;
For all Thy care of us who on Thee wait
The brightness of our eyes so small and round
Which spy the foes no human eye had found;
The tools Thy tiny gardeners never lack,—
Our rakes and pruning-hooks of white and black.

THE SECOND VOICE:
To-morrow we will strive with weed and blight;
Forgive, we pray, our little sins to-night,—
The stolen, tempting berries, two or three.

THE FIRST VOICE: *We cannot sleep if unforgiven by Thee,*
Unless Thou close our triple-guarded eyes
And keep us 'neath Thy wing till morn arise.
Lord, if some man have paid with snare and stone
The songs Thy birds about his path have strown,

The toil that slew the weevil in his wheat,
—Aye though his net have caught some fledgling sweet,
Teach us forgiveness, though it be not easy,
In the dear name of Francis of Assisi,
Forgiving man whatever hurts or girds
Because one man has said, "My brother birds."

THE SECOND VOICE (*as if intoning a Litany*):
And thou, Saint Francis, blesser of our wings,

ALL THE VOICES: *Pray for us!*

THE VOICE: *Priest of the morning lark that soars and sings,*

ALL THE VOICES: *Pray for us!*
Confessor of the Finches! Loving Dreamer,
Who by thy faith became the Birds' Redeemer,
Gave us our souls, absolved them of all taint,

ALL THE VOICES: *Pray for us!*

THE FIRST VOICE: *And obtain, beloved Saint,*
Our grain of barley . . .

THE SECOND VOICE: *Millet . . .*

ANOTHER VOICE: *And of wheat!*

THE FIRST VOICE: *So be it!*

ALL (*with a soft murmur that goes to the very bounds of the forest*): *So be it!*

CHANTICLEER (*stepping, after a moment, from the hollow of a huge tree*): *So be it!*

(*The shadow has grown bluer. A ray of moonlight falls across the spider web which seems sprinkled with silver powder. The* PHEASANT *in her turn comes softly from the tree and comes noiselessly up behind* CHANTICLEER.)

SCENE II

CHANTICLEER, *the* PHEASANT, *some of the time, the* RABBITS; *from time to time, the* WOODPECKER

CHANTICLEER: Now has the moonlight touched the tallest brake.
Now has . . .

A LITTLE TREMBLING VOICE: Night for Delight.

THE PHEASANT: Our thanks, good Weaver, take.
CHANTICLEER: And now . . .
THE PHEASANT (*just behind him*):
Now, in the moonlight, you may steal a kiss.
CHANTICLEER: I hate the Rabbits looking on like this!
(*The* PHEASANT *claps her wings. The* RABBITS, *startled, pop into their holes. On all sides, the white cotton-tails flash into the burrows.*)
PHEASANT (*coming back to* CHANTICLEER): There!
(*Their beaks meet.*) Do you love my forest?
CHANTICLEER: Every tree
For here my Song has come again to me.
—Let's go to roost, for early I must crow.
PHEASANT (*imperiously*): One single time.
CHANTICLEER: Yes.
PHEASANT: For the past month, you know,
Just once a day!
CHANTICLEER (*resignedly*): Yes.
PHEASANT: Does the sun rise yet?
CHANTICLEER: It rises!
PHEASANT: See what bargains I can get!
For one sole song, then, is the dawn less bright?
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT: So . . .
(*Offering her beak*) kiss me!
(*Finding the caress somewhat absent-minded*)
You didn't do it right!
(*Going back to her idea*)
Why should you strive so? All your soul you give.
The dawn is pretty, true, but one must live.
Oh you male creatures! Lacking hens, my dear,
How often you'd be duped!
CHANTICLEER (*with conviction*): But you are here!
PHEASANT: And when I sleep it's barbarous to go
Cocolico a hundred times.
CHANTICLEER: Goosie, cocorico!

PHEASANT: Cocolico!
CHANTICLEER: 'Rico.
PHEASANT (*lifting her head and calling into the top of the tree*):
Oh, Professor, please!
. . . I'll ask the greatest scholar in the trees.
(*To the* WOODPECKER, *who appears half in and half out of a hole near the top of the tree; he wears a green frock coat, a buff waistcoat and a red skull-cap.*)
Does one say Cocoli . . . or Cocorico?
THE WOODPECKER (*bowing a long and learned bill*):
Both are correct.
CHANTICLEER *and the* PHEASANT (*in a breath*):
Uh-hun! I told you so!
THE WOODPECKER: All onomatopœias are empirical.
'Lico is tenderer; 'rico is more lyrical.
(*He disappears.*)
CHANTICLEER: When I cocolico, it is for thee.
PHEASANT: You 'rico for the Dawn.
CHANTICLEER: That's jeal-ous-y!
PHEASANT (*withdrawing coquettishly*):
You love me more than Her?
CHANTICLEER (*with a warning cry*):
A snare! . . . One moment more . . .
(*In reality, close against the tree a net is spread.*)
PHEASANT: It would have sprung!
CHANTICLEER (*looking at it*): The dev . . .
PHEASANT: Prohibited. An Act of 'forty-four.
CHANTICLEER (*laughing*): How do you know that, Sweet?
PHEASANT: Recall my name!
That is a Game Law. She you love is Game!
CHANTICLEER (*with a tinge of sadness*):
Yes, different strains in our two bosoms stir.
PHEASANT (*coming to his side with a bound*):
Oh, more than She you must adore me!
WOODPECKER (*appearing*): Her!
CHANTICLEER (*raising his head*): Not grammar in a love scene!

PHEASANT (*to the* WOODPECKER): Listen here,
Please knock three times before you reappear!
WOODPECKER (*disappearing*): Oh, very well!
PHEASANT (*to* CHANTICLEER):
Somteimes he comes in wrong
But he's a bird of learning, . . . strong . . .
CHANTICLEER (*absently*): How, strong?
PHEASANT: He's a bird linguist!
CHANTICLEER: Ah?
PHEASANT: Because, you see,
Birds, when they pray, use just French poetry.
We chatter in the woods no mortal near,
In onomatopœias crystal clear.
CHANTICLEER: Why, birds speak Japanese!
(*The* WOODPECKER *raps thrice with his beak, Toc-toc-toc, on the tree.*)
Come in!
WOODPECKER: In Japanese?
CHANTICLEER: Yes, so, "tio-tio, twee, twee!"
WOODPECKER: In Japanese!
They've spoken Greek since Aristophanes!
CHANTICLEER (*going ardently to the* PHEASANT):
For the love of Greek! (*they kiss each other*)
WOODPECKER: I tell you, idle youth
Who care so little to be taught the truth,
The stone-chat's merry "wees, wees, wees, trat-tra-ta"
Is a corruption sir, of Lysistrata.
(*He disappears.*)
PHEASANT (*to* CHANTICLEER):
Am I the only girl you ever loved?
(*Toc-toc-toc is heard.*)
CHANTICLEER: Come in!
PHEASANT (*to* CHANTICLEER): You swear it?
WOODPECKER (*appearing, his skull-cap bobbing*):
It is clearly proved.
The thrush sings tira-para in the wood.

Para, along, in Greek; water is understood.
(*He disappears.*)

CHANTICLEER (*to the* PHEASANT): He has Greek on the brain!
PHEASANT: Greek skull-cap, too!
But Chanticleer,—I'm all the world to you?
CHANTICLEER: Of course, but . . .
PHEASANT: In my gown of living gold,
What do you think of me? . .
CHANTICLEER: Dear, I behold
A symbol of the Dawn,—a living law
To make me faithful!
PHEASANT: You never saw
On any morning Dawns like those that rise
At your caresses always in my eyes!
CHANTICLEER: I hold within my heart this memory;—
We two believing in my destiny,
In that great hour when our great love was born,
And you forgot your gold for that of Morn.
PHEASANT: Always the Dawn! I'll say things I'll regret.
CHANTICLEER (*dryly*): Say them.
PHEASANT: Well . . . in the glade . . . to-day . . . I met . . .
CHANTICLEER (*looking at her, cries out*):
Oh! The Cock Pheasant!
(*With sudden violence*): Swear, and swear to-night,
You'll not go near the glade!
PHEASANT (*feeling that she has won*): Give up the Light!
Love me the best!
CHANTICLEER (*sadly*): Oh!
PHEASANT: Promise, just to crow . . .
CHANTICLEER: One single time? I've promised!
(*One hears Toc-toc-toc*) Come in!
WOODPECKER (*appearing and pointing to the net with his long bill*): You should know
The farmer set that trap. He says he'll take
The Pheasant.
PHEASANT (*gaily*): Well, he won't. That's his mistake.

WOODPECKER: He means to keep you on the farm.
PHEASANT (*indignantly*): Alive?
(*To* CHANTICLEER, *in a tone of reproach*):
Your farm!
CHANTICLEER (*seeing a Rabbit at the door of its burrow*):
A Rabbit! Tête-a-têtes don't thrive!
RABBIT (*calling to the* PHEASANT *and showing the snare*):
You see, you put your foot upon this spring.
PHEASANT (*in a superior tone*):
I know traps, sonny. I do no such thing.
Besides, dogs are the only things I fear.
(*To* CHANTICLEER)
Your farm, which you regret!
CHANTICLEER (*in a tone of injured innocence*): Who? Me?
PHEASANT (*to the Rabbit, tapping him with her wing to make him go back to his hole*): Just dogs, my dear.
And that reminds me, it is time I went
And crossed my trail to put them off the scent
CHANTICLEER:
To put them off the scent—good idea—go!
PHEASANT (*starting off, comes back to* CHANTICLEER):
You're homesick for your farm!
CHANTICLEER (*indignantly*): Me? Me?
(*She goes out. He repeats, indignantly*):
Who? Me? You know . . .
(*He follows her with his eyes. Then, whispering to the* WOODPECKER):
Is she clean gone? You're sure she will not come . . .
WOODPECKER (*who can see far, from his hole at the top of the tree*): No.

SCENE III

CHANTICLEER, *the* WOODPECKER

CHANTICLEER (*eagerly*):
I'm going to hear from all the folks at home.
WOODPECKER (*with curiosity*): Through whom?

CHANTICLEER: The Blackbird!
WOODPECKER: Why, I thought he hated . . .
CHANTICLEER: Not that, exactly. He's so rattlepated
Everything goes, with him. He likes to teach me
The latest news.
WOODPECKER (*stupefied*): He's coming here?
CHANTICLEER (*transformed since the* PHEASANT *has left; gay, airy, almost roguish*): Not he. But he can reach me
By telephone. The morning glory vine
About his cage has roots that intertwine
With this white bind-weed by the water, so
(*He goes to the bind-weed*)
We find the service pretty good.
(*He plunges his beak into the trembling, milk-white chalice.*)
Hello!
WOODPECKER (*lifting his head . . . to himself*):
"Allos, another;" speaks to another; from the Greek.
CHANTICLEER: Hello! The Blackbird, please.
WOODPECKER (*keeping watch*): . . . Unwise to speak
Into that very bind-weed in full sight.
CHANTICLEER (*getting more cheerful every minute, coming back to the* WOODPECKER):
No other flower keeps open every night.
When Blackbird answers, as he will you'll see,
He wakes a bee that sleeps in this . . .
THE BEE (*in the bind-weed*): Vrrrr!
CHANTICLEER: The bee!
(*He runs alertly to the flower*): We're connected . . .
WOODPECKER (*shocked by the neologism*):
. . . By a bind-weed. Verbal tricks!
CHANTICLEER (*listening in the chalice*): Ah! . . . this morning?
WOODPECKER (*full of curiosity*): What?
CHANTICLEER (*in a voice suddenly trembling*):
. . . Came off with thirty chicks?
(*He listens again*) Old Briffaut ill?
(*As if something kept him from hearing*)

Dog-on those Dragon Flies!
Ladies, please don't cut in!
(*He listens*) And big Jules tries
To hunt with Patou?
(*To the* WOODPECKER): If you knew Patou!
(*He plunges his head into the bind-weed blossom again*)
Huh? All goes ill without me? Is that true?
(*Highly gratified*) Waste, naturally . . .

WOODPECKER (*on the watch, calls in a low voice*):
The Pheasant!

CHANTICLEER (*deep in the flower cup*): Ah?

WOODPECKER (*desperately agitated*): Oh, do ring off!

CHANTICLEER: . . . Ducks roosted in the barrow, near the trough?

WOODPECKER: 'Sh!

SCENE IV

The Same; the PHEASANT

THE PHEASANT (*as she comes in, making a threatening gesture at the* WOODPECKER): Go back!
(WOODPECKER *retreats precipitately.* PHEASANT *listens to* CHANTICLEER.)

CHANTICLEER (*in the bind-weed. More and more interested*):
Go off! All? . . . Yes . . . No . . . eh? Not steady? . . .

WOODPECKER (*who has timidly reappeared*):
I hope an ant gets on his tongue!

CHANTICLEER (*in the bind-weed*): Already?
The Peacock out of fashion?

WOODPECKER (*trying to warn him, behind the* PHEASANT'S *back*): 'Sh!

PHEASANT (*turning furiously*): You!
(WOODPECKER *retreats again, precipitately.*)

CHANTICLEER (*in the bind-weed*): . . . Rather
An old Cock, eh? . . . The hens . . .
(*With increasing relief in the intonation*)
Well, well! . . . well, well!

(*He ends with evident satisfaction*): A father!
(*As if in answer to a question*)
Do I sing? . . . Yes . . . Not here . . . Down by the pond.

PHEASANT: Huh?

CHANTICLEER (*with a tinge of bitterness*):
These golden birds won't let you go beyond
A little effort and a little cost.
I sing in secret, or the Dawn were lost.

PHEASANT (*advancing threateningly, behind him*): Oh!

CHANTICLEER (*in the bind-weed*):
When all her dazzling beauty . . .

PHEASANT (*checking herself*): Ah!

CHANTICLEER: . . . is asleep . . .
Oh, but a thing to dream of! . . .

PHEASANT (*delighted*): Ah!

CHANTICLEER: I creep

PHEASANT (*enraged*): Oh!

CHANTICLEER: Out in the dew, afar, and sing the number
Of songs I need to wake the Dawn from slumber.
When darkness yields and just one more is needed
I sing that near the Pheasant. It's succeeded
So far . . . Eh, what? . . . The dew? With one wing stroke
I've brushed it from my feet before she woke.

PHEASANT (*behind him*):
You brushed it off! You brushed the dew off!

CHANTICLEER (*turning*): Ay!
(*In the bind-weed*):
No . . . nothing . . . later . . . yes . . . ring off . . . good-bye.

PHEASANT (*violently*): Not only are you trying once again
To get the news of some plain barnyard hen . . .

CHANTICLEER (*evasively*): Oh!

PHEASANT: But even . . .

CHANTICLEER: I . . .

BEE (*in the bind-weed*): Vrrrrrrrr!

CHANTICLEER (*putting his wing over the blossom*): I . . .

BEE (*in the bind-weed, buzzing against his wing*): Vrrrrrrrrrrr!
PHEASANT: Deception so complete
You thought of brushing off your dew-wet feet!
CHANTICLEER: But . . .
PHEASANT: This country fellow from his straw heap taken
And honored with my love! . . . To be forsaken!
CHANTICLEER (*recovering himself*):
To share a soul with Dawn! A better part
Than lonely reigning in an empty heart.
PHEASANT (*unreconciled*): I am forsaken, for Aurora's beam.
CHANTICLEER: All great love lives crowned by a greater Dream.
How can you doubt a nobler love must run
Into a heart wide open to the Sun?
PHEASANT: My burnished wing would sweep all save the present
Clean from your mind . . .
CHANTICLEER: Who, then, are you?
(*They are now face to face, defying each other*)
PHEASANT: The Pheasant!
Who robbed the splendid male of all his gold!
CHANTICLEER. A woman still these splendid plumes enfold,—
A woman,—ever jealous of the Dream!
PHEASANT (*crying madly*):
Ah, fold me to your heart and hush!
CHANTICLEER (*clasping her in a fierce embrace*): I seem
Content in my Cock's heart!
(*Then, with infinite regret*) We've missed the goal!
You do not love the Awakener's sunlit soul.
PHEASANT: Deceived me for the Dawn! At any cost,
Deceive the Dawn for me!
CHANTICLEER: I? How?
PHEASANT (*striking the ground, pettishly, with her foot, and speaking in a spoilt tone*): I want . . .
CHANTICLEER (*horrified*): You've crossed . . .
PHEASANT: You are not to sing for one whole day.
CHANTICLEER: I?
PHEASANT: I want you not to sing for one whole day!

CHANTICLEER: And I say, you've crossed
The bounds of reason. Shall a day be lost,—
To leave the shadows victor in the Valley?
PHEASANT: Oh, what harm could it do, if daylight dally?
CHANTICLEER: What lies too long, enshadowed and asleep,
Grows used to lies, and to Death's slumber deep.
PHEASANT: Don't sing for just one day.
(*In a spiteful tone*) . . . Convince me, dear!
CHANTICLEER (*trembling*): I know what you want!
PHEASANT: And I know what you fear!
CHANTICLEER (*ardently*): I will sing always!
PHEASANT: And if you are wrong?
If dawn could come . . .
CHANTICLEER (*with fierce resolve*):
I'll think it is my Song!
PHEASANT (*with a shower of tears*):
Could you forget it once, if I should cry?
CHANTICLEER: No.
PHEASANT: Could nothing make you miss the hour?
CHANTICLEER: Not I!
I feel the oppression of the dark too much.
PHEASANT: Oppressed, you say? If once put to the touch
You'll find you sing to make the world admire,
And not to bring the dawn. In vain aspire
(*With scornful emphasis*)
To charm the wood that knows the finches' song.
CHANTICLEER: You wish to hurt me, but you do me wrong.
PHEASANT: You wouldn't get the votes, in fifty ages,
Of six toadstools and twenty saxifrages.
The ardent orioles through the bushes thrill
Their "Pir-Piriol."
WOODPECKER (*coming half out of his hole*):
The Greek, "pur, puros."
CHANTICLEER: You, be still!
(*The* WOODPECKER *disappears precipitately.*)

PHEASANT (*insistent*): The Echo finds your efforts rather pale
When she has heard the heavenly Nightingale.
CHANTICLEER: You weary me.
(*He walks away.*)
PHEASANT (*following him*): You've heard him?
CHANTICLEER: Never.
PHEASANT: Well,
So lovely is his music,—Ah, I tell
But half the truth!—that always, they who hear
For the first time . . .
(*She stops, struck with an idea*) Oh!
CHANTICLEER: Oh, what?
PHEASANT: Oh, nothing, dear!
(*Aside*) You feel the dark oppress you! . . .
CHANTICLEER (*coming back*): What?
PHEASANT (*with a little ironical curtsey*): I said
Nothing . . . except . . . I think . . . I'll go to bed.
(CHANTICLEER *goes back to go to roost.*)
THE PHEASANT (*aside, alone*):
He does not know that when the Nightingale
Sings in the sounding forest, all clocks fail.
The happy hours that vanish like a dream
Five blissful minutes to the listener seem,—
Enchanted hours of the old German story.
CHANTICLEER (*seeing that she is not coming, comes back to her*):
What are you saying, love?
PHEASANT (*laughing in his face*): An allegory!
A VOICE (*without*): Illustrious Cock!
CHANTICLEER (*looking about him*): Who calls?
PHEASANT (*who has gone in the direction of the sound*):
There . . . by that stem . . .
(*She suddenly leaps back*)
Gracious, they are . . .
(*Shuddering*) They are . . .
(*She hides in the crotch of the tree, saying*):
You talk to them!

SCENE V

CHANTICLEER; *the* PHEASANT *hidden in the crotch of the tree; the* TOADS

A BIG TOAD (*hopping from the grass*): We come
(*One sees other Toads behind him.*)
CHANTICLEER: Good Lord, how ugly!
THE BIG TOAD (*obsequiously*): I repeat
For all the thinking Woods we come, to greet
The author of the songs . . .
CHANTICLEER (*with disgust*): Ugh! Paunch to paw!
THE BIG TOAD (*giving a little hop toward him*):
New!
ANOTHER TOAD (*same play*): Clear!
ANOTHER TOAD (*same play*): Brief!
ANOTHER TOAD (*same play*): Vital!
TWO TOADS (*hopping, simultaneously*): True to modern law!
CHANTICLEER: Be seated, sirs. Pardon, if my surprise . . .
(*They seat themselves around a big toadstool as around a table.*)
THE BIG TOAD: True, we are ugly!
CHANTICLEER (*politely*): You have pretty eyes.
THE BIG TOAD (*pulling himself up with two hands on the toadstool*): But Chevaliers of this Toad-Table Round,
We praise the Parsifal whom we have found
To give the world a song.
SECOND TOAD: True . . .
BIG TOAD: Heavenly . . .
THIRD TOAD: . . . Of earth, I say . . .
BIG TOAD (*authoritatively*):
That makes the Nightingale's a worn-out lay!
CHANTICLEER (*aghast*): The Nightingale's!
SECOND TOAD (*in a tone of finality*):
Is nothing, sir, to yours. It lacks your range.
CHANTICLEER (*bewildered*): Sirs . . .
BIG TOAD (*with a little jump*): It's time another . . .

SECOND TOAD (*same play*): Another . . .
THIRD TOAD (*same play*): Another . . .
FOURTH TOAD: Something strange . . .
FIFTH TOAD (*eagerly, to his neighbor*):
Above all, something furnished by a stranger . . .
THE BIG TOAD: Should change the fashion.
CHANTICLEER: I . . . to be . . . the changer?
ALL: Praise to the Cock!
CHANTICLEER (*more and more surprised*):
The Wood is not severe!
BIG TOAD: Down with the Nightingale!
CHANTICLEER (*more and more bewildered*): Down with? . . .
SECOND TOAD: Let no Toad hear
His sing-song . . .
BIG TOAD: Insignificant.
THIRD TOAD: And null.
FOURTH TOAD (*scornfully*): A moss-back!
FIFTH TOAD: And this foolish name Bulbul!
ALL (*puffing with laughter, and hopping*): Bul-bul!
BIG TOAD: He goes like this,
(*Imitating*) "Tio! Tio!"
SECOND TOAD: He lacks resource.
His song is just a fountain at its source.
(*He, too, caricatures the* NIGHTINGALE'S *song*) "Tio!"
CHANTICLEER: But . . .
BIG TOAD (*ardently*):
Do not defend,—your own style is too strong,—
The impressionistic gargling of his song.
SECOND TOAD: This worn-out tenor offers every comer
His cavatina of St. Martin's summer.
THIRD TOAD: His "take thy lute,"—it's really too absurd.
CHANTICLEER (*indulgently*):
No doubt he does his best, this little bird.
BIG TOAD: He offends the taste of ever virtuoso.
CHANTICLEER: You want some kind of change, or I suppose so.

THIRD TOAD (*in an unanswerable tone*):
Your song unmasked his out-of-date creations.
ALL THE TOADS (*explosively*): Down with the Nightingale.
CHANTICLEER (*whom by degrees they have surrounded*):
Sirs—dear Batrachians,
My song, 'tis true, has natural notes. It springs
From . . .
BIG TOAD: It gives us wings!
CHANTICLEER (*modestly*): Oh!
ALL (*quivering as if about to fly*): Wings!
BIG TOAD: You sing of Life . . .
CHANTICLEER: Indeed . . .
SECOND TOAD: . . . As one who understood
All life.
CHANTICLEER (*carried away*):
'Tis true I have a crest of flesh and blood.
ALL THE TOADS (*applauding with their little hands*):
Bravo! Very good!
BIG TOAD: That motto is a programme.
SECOND TOAD: Since we've agreed upon a cryptogramme,
Shall we not give the chief . . .
CHANTICLEER (*defending himself*): Kind sirs . . .
SECOND TOAD: . . . We've lacked so long
A banquet . . .
ALL (*beating the Toadstool*): Banquet!
PHEASANT (*putting her head out from her hiding place in the tree*): What's that?
CHANTICLEER (*flattered in spite of himself*):
A banquet to my Song.
PHEASANT (*rather ironically*): You will accept?
CHANTICLEER: What will you . . . Tendencies . . .
Art . . . and the Thinking Forest . . . all of these
(*He indicates the* TOADS)
I give them wings . . . The Bulbul's out, you know . . .
He goes
(*To the* TOADS): How does he goes?

ALL THE TOADS (*grotesquely*): "Tio! Tio! Tio! Tio!"
CHANTICLEER (*to the* PHEASANT, *with indulgent pity*):
He goes "Tio! Tio!"
I think I need not scruple, dear, and so . . .
A VOICE (*in the tree above him sounds a long, moving, limpid note*): Tio!
(*Silence.*)
CHANTICLEER (*trembling, lifting up his head*): What is it?
BIG TOAD (*hastily and embarrassed*):
Nothing. The Nightingale.
THE VOICE (*slowly, marvellously, with the sigh of a soul in every note*): Tio! Tio! Tio! . . . Tio!
CHANTICLEER (*turning to the* TOADS): You Toads!
THE TOADS (*jumping back*): Huh?

SCENE VI

The Same. The NIGHINGALE, *invisible; little by little, all the Animals in the Woods*

THE NIGHTINGALE (*in the tree, in a sighing voice*):
I feel, all little, lost in this black tree,
The mighty soul of evening stirs in me.
CHANTICLEER (*marching to the* TOADS): You dared?
THE TOADS (*recoiling*): But . . .
NIGHTINGALE: Ravine enchanted by the pale moon's shine!
CHANTICLEER: . . . Compare my rude song to that voice divine!
Venomous Toads! . . . Fool, that I did not see
They planned to do to him, as those to me!
BIG TOAD (*suddenly swelling up*): Oh, well! . . .
NIGHTINGALE: The vapors tremble like a veil.
THE BIG TOAD (*vaingloriously*):
Bedecked are we with pustules pale.
(*And all now, puffing, press around* CHANTICLEER *and the tree.*)
CHANTICLEER: I did not see, I, who have envied none,
The poisoned feast that almost was begun.

NIGHTINGALE:
What matter? Soon or late, though all toads planned,
We two,—the strong, the tender,—understand.
CHANTICLEER (*religiously*): Sing!
A TOAD (*hastening to the tree in which the* NIGHTINGALE *sings*):
Let's daub the bark with slimy hands and feet
And slaver on the trunk!
CHANTICLEER (*trying to stop a Toad as he hastens heavily to the tree*): Your voice is sweet,
They tell me. Why this jealousy and hate?
TOAD (*in a tone of real suffering*):
But when another sings, I suppurate!
(*And he joins his brothers.*)
BIG TOAD (*frothing and mumbling*):
There comes upon our tongues a scum-like lather.
(*To his neighbor*)
Toadspittle . . .
THE OTHER: I gather.
ANOTHER: Toadspittle . . .
ALL: We gather.
A TOAD (*tenderly, putting his arm around the neck of one who hangs back*): Come slaver!
CHANTICLEER (*to the* NIGHTINGALE): They will mar your song.
NIGHTINGALE (*proudly*): Ah, no. But rather
I'll take up their refrain in mine . . .
BIG TOAD (*caressing the head of a little one*): Come slaver!
THE TOADS (*all together at the foot of the tree which they encircle in a crawling mass*):
The warty toads, around we go.
NIGHTINGALE: And make thereof a Villanelle.
TOADS: In slimy skins, we slaver slow.
NIGHTINGALE: I sing, and no repose I know.
My drooping wings my longing tell.
TOADS: The warty toads, around we go.
(*And the Villanelle continues, made by the alternating voices, one weaving a song ever higher, and more deliriously*

sweet; the others, with the refrain, ever more envious, hoarser and lower.)

THE NIGHTINGALE *and* THE TOADS:

I sing. Blue clear the heavens grow
And in the soul of evening dwell . . .
—*In slimy skins we slaver slow.*

All lovely words that throb and glow
And dusk-sweet breath of pimpernel . . .
—*The warty toads around we go.*

Young love that dreams not of love's woe,
These weight my heart, and from it well . . .
—*In slimy skins we slaver slow.*

Raptures, despairs of long ago,
Held by some dread enchantment's spell.
—*The warty toads around we go.*

All sobs from my soft bosom flow,
There Lost Hope has her citadel.
—*In slimy skins we slaver slow.*

My deathless songs as blossoms, blow,—
The wind flower, and the asphodel.
—*The warty toads around we go.*

CHANTICLEER (*rapt into the rhythm*):
Near these delicious pipes, my crow
Would jangle like a broken bell.
Sing! They retreat!

TOADS (*who are really retreating, dispersed by the victorious song*): . . . *we slaver slow.*

CHANTICLEER: They go, in witches' pots to throw
Dark potions, evil fates to tell,
Black magic, as . . .

TOADS (*already in the underbrush*): . . . *around we go.*
CHANTICLEER: But thou! The beasts, or friend or foe,
Troop down to drink thy villanelle.
Oh, see! They come, enchanted . . .
TOADS (*losing themselves in the weeds*): —*slow.*
CHANTICLEER: On dainty hoofs, a trembling doe
Comes, as her longing doth impell,
Albeit a wolf behind doth
TOADS (*altogether vanishing*): —*go.*
CHANTICLEER: The squirrels join our group below;
The wild hare hastens from the dell.
The woods learn brotherhood, Ah! . . .
(*Vague note, very far away*): —*slow.*
CHANTICLEER: No toad remains on earth, I know!
(*The song reigns. It is now only a romance without words, a shower of ecstatic notes.*)
CHANTICLEER: The glow-worms now their little lamps hang out.
Goodness comes forth, and hate is put to rout.
Hunters and hunted in a circle wait,
Harmless and happy as in earth's first state.
The evening star seems suddenly less far.
The spider, looking up to where you are,
Throws far her silver thread . . . begins to climb . . .
ALL THE FOREST (*in a long sigh of ecstasy*): Ah!
(*And it is like an Enchanted Forest; the moonlight is softer; the little green fires of the glow-worm twinkle in the moss, and from all sides, around the trees slip the shadows of the charmed beasts, muzzles lifted, eyes shining. And the* WOODPECKER, *his bark door opened, bows his beak reverently. And all the* RABBITS, *their long ears lifted, stand at their clay thresholds.*)
CHANTICLEER: What does he sing, using no word or rhyme, Squirrel?
SQUIRREL (*from his height*): He sings of leaps!
CHANTICLEER: What say you, Hare?
THE HARE (*in the copse*): Of fears!

CHANTICLEER: You, Rabbits?
ONE OF THE RABBITS: Of the Dew.
CHANTICLEER: You, Fawn?
THE FAWN (*in the depths of the woods*): Of tears.
CHANTICLEER: You, Wolf?
THE WOLF (*with a gentle, far-off howl*): The Moon!
CHANTICLEER: Tree of the golden wound,
O singing Pine?
THE PINE (*one of whose branches vaguely beats time*):
My wounds shall yet resound
Beneath the resined bow in harmonies.
CHANTICLEER: Woodpecker, you?
THE WOODPECKER (*ecstatically*): Of Aristophanes . . .
CHANTICLEER (*hurriedly, interrupting him*):
I know . . . You, Spider?
THE SPIDER (*swaying at the end of her thread*):
Oh, in every lovely strain
There shines my web embroidered by the rain.
CHANTICLEER: You, Raindrop-in-the-web?
A LITTLE VOICE (*coming from the web*): I see afar
The glow-worm.
CHANTICLEER: You, Glow-worm?
A LITTLE VOICE (*in the grass*): Oh, the Star!
CHANTICLEER: You whose pale beams our little forest cover,
If I may speak to you . . .
A VOICE (*from the sky*): Of earth's first Lover.
CHANTICLEER: What is this spring . . .
PHEASANT (*scanning the horizon through the trees*):
'Twas not so pale at first.
CHANTICLEER: Where each one finds the water for his thirst?
(*Listening more devoutly*)
He tells me of the Day my song must bring.
PHEASANT (*aside*): And tells so well that you forgot to sing.
CHANTICLEER: Woodcock, what living water have you drawn?
WOODCOCK: I don't know, but it's lovely.
PHEASANT (*who, for her part, has not failed for a moment to watch the horizon*): Nearly gone!

CHANTICLEER (*to the* NIGHTINGALE, *in a discouraged voice*):
Oh, sing! But, knowing crystal, shall I trust
My copper trumpet?

NIGHTINGALE: Chanticleer, you must.

CHANTICLEER: How can I sing? My song will seem to me
Too crimson and too brutal.

NIGHTINGALE: Mine, maybe,
Seems sometimes far too facile and too blue.

CHANTICLEER: How have I won this graciousness from you?

NIGHTINGALE: You fought a battle for my love, the Rose.
Know then this brave, sad thing each toiler knows,
That never Cock of Dawn or Nightingale
Sings all he dreams. If we succeed, we fail.

CHANTICLEER (*with passionate desire*): To be a lullaby!

NIGHTINGALE: To be a Cry!

CHANTICLEER: I make none weep!

NIGHTINGALE: And I arouse none, I! . . .
(*But after this breath of regret he takes up again his song, with a voice always higher, sweeter, purer.*)
What does it matter! Sing, Ah sing! though knowing
That nobler songs from other lips are flowing!
Sing! Sing! until . . .
(*A detonation. A flash from the thicket. Brief silence. Then a little dingy body falls at* CHANTICLEER'S *feet.*)

CHANTICLEER (*leans over, looks*):
The Nightingale . . . is killed.
(*And without seeing the pale tremor that begins to stir in the air, he cries with a sob*)
Dead! When his song had not five minutes thrilled!
(*One or two feathers softly fall.*)

PHEASANT: His feathers!

CHANTICLEER (*as the little body moves convulsively for the last time*): Die, then, little André Chenier.
(*Rustling of dry leaves, and from a thicket emerges* PATOU'S *shaggy head.*)

SCENE VII

The Same. For a short time, PATOU

CHANTICLEER (*to* PATOU): You!
(*With bitter reproach*) You come to hunt him.
PATOU (*ashamed*): Big Jules' poaching mania
Makes me . . .
CHANTICLEER (*who has sprung in front of the body to shield it, now steps aside, disclosing it*): A Nightingale!
PATOU (*hanging his head*): Yes, men are strong
And they send bullets where they hear a song.
CHANTICLEER: The beetle-sexton come. Oh, see, Patou!
PATOU (*steps back, softly*):
Big Jules shall never know his shot went true.
PHEASANT (*always looking toward the East*):
He does not see the night depart!
CHANTICLEER (*leaning toward the grass, which moves softly about the little body*): Work well,
And let the body sleep just where it fell.
You Beetles know the truth men hold so cheap,
That we sleep best, where we have fallen asleep.
The happiest sleep is theirs, the holiest tomb,
Who rest unmoved where Death has built their home.
(*To the* BEETLES, *as the* NIGHTINGALE'S *body is softly lowered*): Cover him . . .
PHEASANT (*aside, looking to the East*): Over there . . .
CHANTICLEER: Yet he shall rise,
And see, this night, the Bird of Paradise.
PHEASANT (*aside*): The horizon pales!
(*A whistle is heard in the distance.*)
PATOU (*to* CHANTICLEER): I'll come back. Jules is calling.
PHEASANT (*looking now at* CHANTICLEER, *now at the East, uneasily*): Ah, how to keep from him what is befalling?
(*She goes tenderly to* CHANTICLEER, *her wings open to hide from him the direction whence a suggestion of light is coming, and, profiting by his grief*):
Come, weep beneath my wing!

(*With a sob, he puts his head under the wing of his comforter, which quickly enfolds him.*)

THE PHEASANT (*lulls him, murmuring*): My wing is soft.

CHANTICLEER (*huskily*): Yes.

PHEASANT (*lulling him and looking behind her from time to time, turning her head quickly, watching the dawning light.*)

(*Aside*) Dawn is near.

(*To* CHANTICLEER) You see . . .

(*Aside*) . . . I see aloft

(*To* CHANTICLEER) My wing . . .

(*Aside*) Crimson upon the trees.

(*To* CHANTICLEER)

A shield, a cradle, and a cloak, all these,
A kiss, that lies like thistle-down about you.
You see . . .

(*She bounds aside, folding her wings*)

You see that Dawn can come without you!

CHANTICLEER (*with the uttermost cry of agony that voice can utter*): Ah!

PHEASANT (*implacably*): The moss will soon be crimson.

CHANTICLEER (*running to the Mosses*): No! Oh, wait!
Not without me! Not without me!

(*The Mosses grow pink*) Ingrate!

PHEASANT: The horizon . . .

CHANTICLEER (*imploringly to the horizon*): No!

PHEASANT: Grows golden.

(*Truly, all the East is gold.*)

CHANTICLEER (*reeling*): Treachery!

PHEASANT: You're nothing to the Dawn,—the world to me!

CHANTICLEER (*feebly*): It's true . . .

PATOU (*returning happy and cordial*):

I've come to take you home, my lad;
Everyone wants you,—why the Farm's gone mad
Wanting the Cock their daylight to restore.

CHANTICLEER: So they believe, since I believe no more!

PATOU (*stopping, dismayed*): What?
PHEASANT (*leaning eagerly against* CHANTICLEER):
Better a heart pressed closer against your heart
Than the High Heaven that does its work apart!
CHANTICLEER: Yes.
PHEASANT: Nor need we care that shadows lie below
If heart to heart as one . . .
CHANTICLEER (*half-heartedly*): Y-yes . . .
(*Suddenly he springs away from her, stands at his full height and cries with a loud voice*): Cocorico!
PHEASANT (*dismayed*): Why do you crow?
CHANTICLEER: That I may be reproved
Who have three times denied the thing I loved.
PHEASANT: What now?
CHANTICLEER: My task.
(*To* PATOU): The trail! It's all I ask.
Lead on!
PHEASANT: What are you going to do?
CHANTICLEER: My task!
PHEASANT (*furiously*): What night remains?
CHANTICLEER: Closed eyes let no day through.
PHEASANT (*showing him the increasing glory of the East*):
Go, wake the sleepers!
CHANTICLEER: And St. Peter, too!
PHEASANT: This day, without your song, has come to be!
CHANTICLEER: My task is surer than the day I see!
PHEASANT (*pointing to the* NIGHTINGALE'S *body already half lost to sight*):
Your faith can no more rise than that dead bird.
A VOICE (*in the tree above their head, suddenly gives forth a note, limpid, moving, exquisite*): Tio! Tio!
THE PHEASANT (*amazed*): Another song?
PATOU (*his ears pricked up*): Better than that we heard
Before.
PHEASANT (*terrified, looking first into the tree, then at the half-made grave*): Still other songs, although the first one fail?

THE VOICE: There must be, in the Woods, a Nightingale.
CHANTICLEER (*with exultation*):
And in the soul, so fixed and sure a faith
That it will rise, triumphant, over death.
PHEASANT: But if the sun rise?
CHANTICLEER: Then it comes I say
For fragments of my song of yesterday.
(*At this moment damp gray clouds pass above the trees.*)
THE OWLS (*whooting with joy*): He's silent!
PATOU (*lifting his head and following them with his eyes*):
. . . Owls, that hid beneath the roof
And in the belfry, come . . .
OWLS (*regaining their holes in the old trees*): He's still! He's still!
CHANTICLEER: Here's proof
That I have served the lovely Light of Day.
When I am silent, all the Owls are gay.
(*Marching up to the* PHEASANT, *with a sort of challenge*)
I make Aurora come,—nor is that all.
PHEASANT (*chokingly*): You make . . . ?
CHANTICLEER: On those gray mornings when no sunbeams fall
Upon the flock that thinks itself undone,
The copper of my song reflects the sun.
(*And he stands boldly*)
Come! Let me sing!
PHEASANT: What power has he to aid
Who doubts his task?
CHANTICLEER: Why,—one just plies his trade.
PHEASANT (*with obstinate anger*):
But if without you, still the great orb runs?
CHANTICLEER: Then I am Cock of yet more distant Suns.
My cry the veil of Night so rends and mars,
It makes those peeps of day we call the stars.
I shall not see lighten on all the towers
Those massed stars, turning Night to golden showers,
But if I sing, sonorous, clear, exact,
And if still other Cocks repeat the act,

Sonorous, true, on every farm, I say
That there will be no Night.

PHEASANT: Ah, when?

CHANTICLEER: Some Day.

PHEASANT: Go, then! Forget our Forest!

CHANTICLEER: Surely not!
Can I forget the noble, verdant spot,
That taught me this: who loses the Great Dream
Must die, or rise and conquer in its beam!

PHEASANT (*in a voice she tries to make insulting*):
Go, mount your ladder with those barnyard things.

CHANTICLEER: The birds have taught me how to mount with wings!

PHEASANT: Go home, to see the Old Hen in the Basket.

CHANTICLEER: Forest, what will she say,—I humbly ask it,—
Forest of Toads and Poachers,—things unpleasant,—
Forest of Nightingale,—and of the Pheasant!
What will she say to me, since I have known
Your joys, your pains?

PATOU (*imitating the loving old voice*): "He has grown."

CHANTICLEER (*earnestly*): Yes, I have grown.
(*He starts off.*)

PHEASANT: He's gone! To keep them, spite of all Fate brings,
We need arms! arms! And we have only wings!

CHANTICLEER (*stopping, troubled*): She's crying?

PATOU (*hurriedly*): Come along!

CHANTICLEER: Not yet!

PATOU: All right.
It takes an old dog to endure that sight!

PHEASANT (*bounding toward* CHANTICLEER, *crying*):
Take me!

CHANTICLEER (*turning; in an inflexible voice*):
Will you come next the Dawn?

PHEASANT (*recoiling fiercely*): Never!

CHANTICLEER: Good-bye!

PHEASANT: I hate you!

CHANTICLEER (*already starting homeward through the underbrush*):
I adore you. Therefore I
But ill could serve the Great Cause I adore
Near one who values any creature more!
(*He disappears.*)

SCENE VIII

The PHEASANT, PATOU; *later, the* WOODPECKER, *the* RABBITS *and the Voices of the Waking Forest*

PATOU: Cry, then!
SPIDER (*in her web, which has caught a ray of sunshine*):
Morning, take warning!
PHEASANT (*furiously, breaking the web with her wing*):
Spider, be still!
He flouted me! I wish some fate would kill . . .
WOODPECKER (*who from his window has watched* CHANTICLEER'S *departure, suddenly in a tone of alarm*):
The Poacher sees him.
OWLS (*in the trees*): The Cock had better run!
A YOUNG RABBIT (*standing on tiptoe to see what the Poacher is doing*): He's broke his gun in two!
AN OLD RABBIT: To load it, son!
PATOU (*terrified*): Will that begaitered, yellow-legginged peasant
Shoot at a Cock?
PHEASANT (*opening her wings*): Not if he sees a Pheasant!
PATOU (*throwing himself in front of her*):
What are you going to do?
PHEASANT: My task!
(*She flies toward the danger.*)
WOODPECKER (*seeing that as she rises she will touch the spring of the forgotten snare*): The trap! Beware!
(*Too late. The spring flies.*)
PHEASANT (*with a cry of despair*): Ah!
PATOU: She is taken!
PHEASANT (*struggling in the meshes*): He is lost!

PATOU (*wildly*): She here . . . he there!
(*All the Rabbits stick their heads out to see what is happening.*)
PHEASANT (*crying aloud in an ardent prayer*):
O Dawn protect him!
THE OWLS (*hopping for joy on their perches*):
See the barrel shine!
PHEASANT: Touch with thy dew-wet wing,—for he is thine,
O Dawn,—the cartridge! Trip him in his path!
He hunts thy Cock! Ah, strike him in Thy wrath!
Speak, Nightingale! The cruel are his foes!
NIGHTINGALE (*with a supplicating sob*):
He fought a battle for my love, the Rose!
PHEASANT (*solemnly*):
Oh, let him live! And I will find my share
Of all the world within his barnyard there!
O Sun, my Cock your banner has unfurled
That makes his shadow . . . that makes all my world!
(*The day grows brighter. Sounds from all sides.*)
WOODPECKER (*singing*): The sky is blue!
A ROOK (*flying by, cawing*): The daylight grows!
PHEASANT: Day wakes to give him warning! . . .
ALL THE BIRDS (*waking in all the trees*):
Good morning! Good morning! Good morning! Good morning!
PHEASANT: They can sing!
A JAY (*passing, like a blue flame*): Ha-ha!
WOODPECKER (*nodding gravely*): That is Homeric laughter.
PHEASANT (*crying in the midst of the waking world*):
Oh, let him live!
THE JAY (*repassing*): Ha-ha!
A CUCKOO (*far away*): Cuckoo!
PHEASANT: I yield! Forever after!
PATOU (*lifting his head to the sky*): Forever after!
PHEASANT: Light, whom I dared dispute, O please forgive!
Shine in the hunter's eyes, and let him live!

And thine, O Morning Glow, the praise shall be
If thy gold powder . . .
(*A detonation. She utters a sharp cry*)
Ah!
(*And then finishes in a scarcely audible voice*)
. . . win the victory!
(*Silence.*)

CHANTICLEER'S VOICE (*from a great distance*): Cocorico!

CRY OF ALL THE FOREST: Saved!

RABBITS (*gaily, coming out of their holes*):
Let's turn a hand-spring in the thyme out there!

A VOICE (*fresh and solemn, in the trees*): *O God of Birds!*

RABBITTS (*ceasing their antics, and suddenly still and solemn*):
It is the morning prayer.

WOODPECKER (*calling to the* PHEASANT):
They're coming for the net.

PHEASANT (*closing her eyes*): So be it, then.

THE VOICE (*in the trees*): *God, Whose we are . . .*

PATOU: Hush! Lower the curtain! Men!

(*He goes out. All the animals hide. And in the net, wings spread wide, throat quivering, pressed close to earth, feeling the approach of the giant, she waits.*)

(*The curtain falls*)

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